

THE VOICE

MAGAZINE

Vol 18 Iss 42 2010-10-22

Mirror, Mirror

Google tells all

Against the Grain

Gluten-free

Preservation

Jazz: past, present, and future

*Plus: Voix du Maghreb, Write Stuff,
From Where I Sit, 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, and please
indicate if we may publish your letter.



**Re: "From Where I Sit : Radio Days and Nights" by Hazel Anaka, v18 i41
(2010-10-15)**

As I was reading Hazel's last column, I recalled an incident that shows
the degree to which I have become addicted to the CBC, almost from
childhood to the present (77 and counting).

While on a ski- touring trip in the early eighties, a friend, trying to
put on his ski-boots in the cramped cab of my truck, accidentally
knocked off the . . . tuning knob on my non-push-button radio. When I was
selling the truck, seven years later, I had to explain to the buyer that
the radio was tuned to the CBC, couldn't be changed, and I had never
felt the need to fix it!

I think the CBC is one of the best values that Canadians are getting for
their tax dollar, and I hope that the current government doesn't
succeed in their current efforts to destroy the corporation.

Sincerely,

Ron Tebo

OUT OF THE BOX

Christina M. Frey

Through the Google Glass



When my friend began dating her now-husband, the first thing she and I did was run an Internet search. What kind of a guy was he? Short of waiting to find out—and who wants to do that?—our next best bet was to check out the online trail he'd left. He passed muster, and now they're married. But it still fascinates me that Google was our first go-to source in time of "need."

Fast-forward a few years to a time when online privacy is a hot topic. With Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and other

social media taking the heat for breaking down privacy barriers, it's easy to forget that the lowly Google search still has plenty to say—about us.

The fact is, Google has become synonymous with the quest for information—whether it's a matter of a potential love interest, a job applicant, a vacation destination, a review of a local diner, or how to fix that noise the heater's making. Running a Google search has become so ingrained in our culture that the verb "to Google" something has found its way into our lexicon.

That's why a recent *New York Times* [article](#) decrying the practice of Googling yourself caught me by surprise. The author/blogger challenges self-Googlers to own up to their "self-absorbed" practice of "auto-neurotic stimulation." He acknowledges limited instances of usefulness, but largely describes the practice as feeding our already overbloated egos.

Granted, on paper, researching oneself does smack of a certain flavour of narcissism. But given the realities of our online culture, self-Googling is something everybody should do, and regularly.

Maybe no-one's looking for me this minute, and perhaps it seems egotistical to think they might. But someday, a potential employer, client, school, grant committee, organization, or other entity might want to know a little more about me than I'll have provided them directly. And chances are, the first thing they'll turn to is a Google search.

If someone could possibly be looking me up in the future, shouldn't I keep on top of the online persona I have out there, rather than waiting until I apply to that school, for example, and then scrambling to do damage control?

The pervasiveness of online culture has changed the way we see other people. Whereas before, all that was needed to impress was a good suit and nice pair of shoes, now we need the whole package. Like it or not, we've become a brand unto ourselves.

Egotistical? Perhaps. But it's reality. And keeping track of that "brand," like taking care of that suit, is just common sense.

*... what you say or do
online becomes a record
of who you were/are,
regardless of whether
you intended it that way.*



Out of curiosity, I Googled myself—admittedly, for the first time in far too long. Not surprisingly, I found a lot of my writing. But there were also some things that I wasn't expecting. For instance, book and DVD reviews I'd written as an Amazon.com customer years ago were still floating around in cyberspace. It was slightly unsettling to think that what's often seen as very casual writing is permanently out there. In my web travels, I've read some reviews—and easily traceable blog and forum posts—that were rife with grammatical errors, poor logic, and childish rants.

My point: what you say or do online becomes a record of who you were/are, regardless of whether you intended it that way.

It's not just privacy junkies or conspiracy theorists who urge people to pay attention to the online identity they've put out there. U.S. President Barack Obama warned students to "be careful" about what they post online, reminding them that in these times, "[w]hatever [they] do . . . will be pulled up later."

Countless media sources have cautioned job seekers to clean up their online image. And even *Marie Claire* recommends keeping tabs on our online personas in order to avoid scaring off potential dates. First impressions do matter, and more and more frequently, that first impression occurs in virtual space.

Nor is it merely a matter of putting our best foot forward to get that job, promotion, or acceptance letter. One law firm encourages its employees to "own" their name, acknowledging that opponents will first turn to Google for the quick lowdown. Lesson to the rest of us: even friendly rivals can use information to get ahead.

What's the solution? When doing anything online—*anything*—remember that you're leaving a permanent record. Learn to work with the privacy settings for your social media, keeping in mind that they're constantly changing. But regardless of how privately you believe you're acting, start thinking through each online action, asking yourself just what kind of virtual trail you could be leaving. And it's often necessary to go a little further, thinking about how someone years down the road might interpret what you just put out there.

Social media (including Twitter), forums, product reviews, blogs, photo hosting sites, and writing—including letters to the editor from your highschool newspaper—all work together to create an image that may or may not reflect the image you'll want to project, whether now or in a few years.

So yes, Google yourself, by all means, but don't do it blindly. Take a good look in the Google mirror—and the Facebook and Twitter and Flickr mirrors, too—and discover just what type of person your online alter ego is pretending to be.





Entretien avec Jasser Haj Youssef, 1re partie

Violoniste virtuose, compositeur, professeur et chercheur, Jasser Haj Youssef est ce musicien tunisien qui, le premier, a introduit la viole d'amour (violon baroque muni de cordes sympathiques) dans la musique arabe. Résidant à présent en France, sa carrière lui a permis de partager la scène avec Cheikha Rimitti, Karim Ziad, Barbara Hendricks et bien d'autres musiciens remarquables. Ayant étudié au cours de ses études doctorales les similitudes entre les improvisations de la musique arabe et celles du jazz, il a également contribué de manière significative à la fusion du jazz et de la musique arabe. Dernièrement, Jasser a pris le temps de parler de sa formation et de ses influences musicales avec Wanda Waterman St. Louis.

Les premières années

Lorsque je suis né, un ami de mon père m'a offert un petit violon (taille 1/4). J'ai été très attaché à cet instrument et j'ai décidé de l'apprendre. Le violon est un instrument passionnant que nous trouvons dans toutes les cultures du monde.

J'ai grandi à Monastir, une belle ville sur les côtes tunisiennes. Enfant, ma grand-mère me chantait du *malûf* (musique arabo-andalouse), mon père et ses amis musiciens interprétaient le répertoire de musique arabe classique. Lorsque j'avais trois ans, j'ai assisté à un concert de la chanteuse Choubeila Rached qui m'a beaucoup marqué.

Dix ans plus tard, j'ai eu la chance de l'accompagner au violon sur scène et à la maison dans des soirées familiales. On avait plusieurs instruments à la maison : piano, clarinette, oud, violons, flûte et percussions . . . La musique fait partie de notre vie quotidienne.

Mes repères vont de la musique classique européenne jusqu'au jazz, du répertoire traditionnel du Maghreb jusqu'en Orient, sans oublier des cultures importantes qui m'ont beaucoup influencé comme les musiques ottomane, indienne et africaine.

J'ai eu la chance d'avoir une double éducation musicale : la première est académique (études aux conservatoires et instituts supérieurs de musique en Tunisie et en Europe). Ma deuxième formation est basée sur la transmission orale, grâce à des maîtres de musique traditionnelle et du jazz.

De quelles conditions avez-vous besoin dans votre vie pour être créatif ?

Différentes sensations comme l'amour ou la nostalgie peuvent créer en moi un besoin de créer la musique.



*Above: Jasser Haj Youssef.
Photo: Fabien Lemaire.*

Certains livres, albums, musiciens ou films ont-ils été des points de repère dans votre développement créatif ?

Des albums comme « Fakkarouni » de Mohamed ABDEL WAHAB (version Oum Kalthoum), « The Kind Of Blue » de Mile DAVIS et « Sonates et Partitas pour violon seul » de J.S. BACH (version David OISTRAKH) continuent encore à m’influencer !

La voix de Saliha et de Bulent ERSOY ont toujours de l’effet sur moi. Des musiciens comme L. SUBRMANIAM, Ridha AL-KALAIL, Stéphane GRAPPELLI et Mustafa KANDIRALI ont enrichi mon son et mon phrasé.

Certains livres sur l’histoire du jazz m’ont fait découvrir la beauté de cette musique.

Comment avez-vous développé votre propre style de jeu ?

Mon jeu n’est pas basé uniquement sur des techniques violonistiques. Il s’inspire beaucoup de la voix humaine et du chant, ce qui explique le côté vocal et le souffle qu’on entend lorsque je joue du violon ou de la viole d’amour.

La suite, la semaine prochaine!

CLICK OF THE WRIST: Book Club

There’s no greater way to beat the autumn chill than by sipping a mug of cider and curling up with a good book—but it’s a joy that’s even better shared. Book clubs are increasing in popularity, and it’s no surprise; talking about that thrilling novel (or terrible one) creates a certain psychological bond, something often lacking in today’s fast-paced, blink-and-you’ll-miss-it world. Since October is National Reading Group Month, now’s the ideal time to find a book club “home”—or to start one yourself.

Goodreads

Goodreads is the go-to site for bookworms. Users can set up their “bookshelves” to show what they’re currently reading, what they’ve read, and what’s on their to-read list. They can also see what their friends are reading, and read reviews by other users. Plus, Goodreads facilitates a good selection of online book clubs that are centred on location, genre/literary preferences, or personal background and interests.

LitLovers

If you want to start your own book club, enhance your current club’s discussion, or simply immerse yourself in literary knowledge, visit LitLovers. The website, which is “dedicated to books and book clubs—because both enrich our lives,” contains book guides with synopses and discussion questions. Book guides cover both popular novels and literary classics. LitLovers also offers resources for those interested in starting up their own book groups, and recipes for literary-gourmet crossover clubs.

Book Club Girl

Anyone interested in reading groups or literature in general will enjoy the books, news, and tips featured in this lively blog. Book Club Girl also hosts an online radio show, *Book Club Girl on Air*, which features author interviews.



HEALTH MATTERS

Katie D'Souza

**What's The Fuss About Gluten-Free?**

Gluten is the reason that bread rises. It's the reason that bread is able to maintain its shape and consistency. Gluten may even be the reason bread stays fresh for several days. But gluten can also be the reason we experience headaches, flatulence, bloating, diarrhea, and poor vitamin absorption.

What Is Gluten?

Gluten is a protein that is naturally occurring in grains like wheat, kamut, spelt, barley, triticale, malt, and rye. So why the gluten-free hype?

Let's start with a little background. When you eat, your meal is broken down in your digestive system, and its nutrients are absorbed by villi, small, finger-like projections in the intestines. Usually, there isn't a problem when gluten is absorbed. However, some people are highly allergic to gluten (it's called celiac disease), while others have varying degrees of sensitivity to this protein. For these people, gluten can pose a variety of health concerns, from lesser abdominal problems (like gas) to major malabsorption syndrome, where the body is unable to absorb most nutrients from food. In other words, for some, avoiding gluten is in their best interests; hence, the gluten-free diet.

What Is Gluten-Free?

So, if the gluten-free diet is wheat-free, then what is left to eat? After all, wheat is a staple in many North American households; on a yearly basis, it's estimated that we consume over 40,000,000 tonnes of wheat. Fortunately, there are many other grains available. Those who go gluten-free can still bake with flours made from amaranth, quinoa, corn, tapioca, rice, potato, teff, and sorghum. (Depending on a person's level of sensitivity, oats may be added to this list as well). You might never have heard of potato bread or quinoa pasta, or tasted brownies made from a blend of tapioca and rice flours, but there are recipes and products out there!

It's also important to note that going gluten-free isn't only about avoiding wheat-based bread, pasta, and treats. Gluten is also an additive in some processed foods, and wheat products (containing gluten, of course) are often used as thickening agents in commercial food preparations. Depending on the level of a person's gluten sensitivity, it might even be necessary to be careful when partying. Alcoholic beverages like tequila, rum, and vodka are often made from wheat, rye, or barley, with the potential for trace amounts of gluten.

Why Would I?

Maybe you're thinking that you're one of those lucky people who escaped gluten sensitivity—you're eating your morning wheat toast and thanking your stars. But I challenge you to try the gluten-free diet for three weeks. There is a current theory that relates over-consumption of gluten-containing grains with predisposition to gluten sensitivity in the future. Think of it as constant, albeit minor, stress on your digestive system. And some who attempt a gluten-free diet discover other health benefits they hadn't bargained for, such as elevated energy levels or relief of chronic constipation. Gluten overload just might be dampening your ability to enjoy life!

Worth the Effort

There's no doubt about it—going gluten-free is a challenge. But that doesn't mean it can't be done, and successfully (and tastily), too! With the sudden interest in alternative grains, many of which are gluten-free, there are more gluten-free choices for consumers than ever before. You can even find specialized bakeries and restaurants that focus on gluten-free products, and some restaurant chains now have gluten-free offerings. Online, there is an abundance of recipes and support.

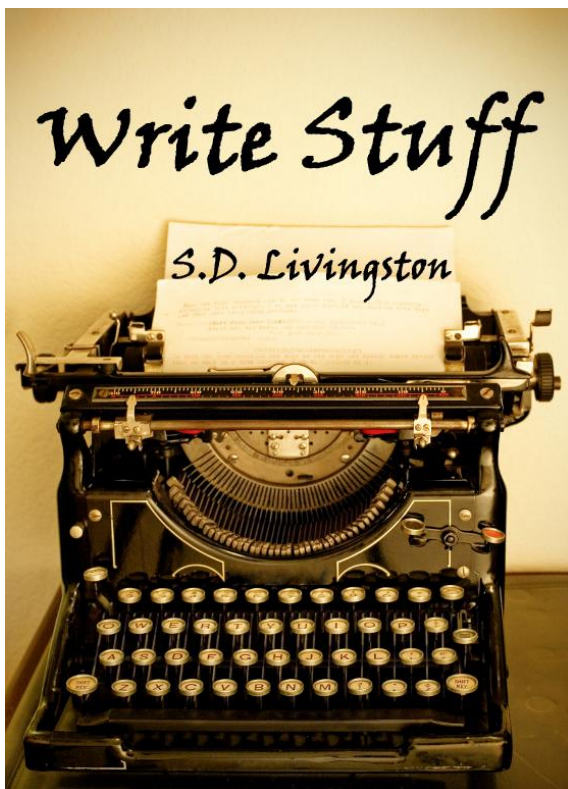
You may not want to permanently stay on a gluten-free diet if you aren't especially sensitive. However, there is always the option of reducing gluten in your diet.

The idea of incorporating alternative grains into your diet isn't that unusual; many cultures place dietary emphasis on grains that don't contain gluten (for example, rice). Such grains often boast significant nutritional potential. Amaranth, for instance, is three times higher in calcium than cow's milk.

Using vegetables is another possibility; adding a handful of potatoes to thicken your soup heightens the nutrient content more than if you'd added flour for the same purpose. Gluten-free grains and vegetables possess a variety of different tastes and textures, and can often be a pleasing change to our wheat- and gluten-laden palates. Start experimenting!

Katie D'Souza is an AU graduate and a licensed naturopathic doctor. She currently lives in Ontario.

Disclaimer: The information contained in this article is for personal interest only; it is not intended for diagnosis or treatment of any condition. Readers are always encouraged to seek the professional advice of a licensed physician or qualified health care practitioner for personal health or medical conditions.



Ghostwriters in the Machine

If you're a Justin Bieber fan, you've probably been eagerly awaiting the latest bit of merchandise to spring from the giant Bieber promotion machine. It's called *First Step 2 Forever: My Story*, and it's the pop sensation's autobiography.

Now, it's perfectly possible that the 15-year-old found time to sit down and write a book (and do the inevitable rewrites) while practising, touring, tweeting, filming music videos, and appearing on everything from awards shows to *CSI* to *The Today Show* in the past few months. Possible, but highly unlikely.

Which raises an interesting question: why is literature the only place it's considered okay to fake a performance?

Faking it (or ghostwriting, as it's more politely known) used to be considered scandalous. In 1796, when George Washington's "Farewell Address" appeared in American newspapers, the work was attributed solely to him—even though, as this *American Prospect* article notes, "Alexander Hamilton . . . did

most of the writing.” The idea that the president claimed someone else’s words as his own was so ignoble that Hamilton’s wife ended up having to sue to prove her husband’s authorship.

My, how things have changed. Ghostwriting isn’t just widely accepted now; it’s also, in many cases, expected. From prime ministers’ speeches to the “autobiographies” of stars, there’s widespread acceptance of the fact that no one is writing their own material. It’s a given that politicians have legions of staff writing speeches for them, and that celebrities are either too busy or too phonetically challenged to string an entire book together. Yet most of the time, the stars and politicians still put their own names to the work. Only rarely does anyone acknowledge that someone else sat down and corralled all those pesky words into sentences.

Even the world of fiction isn’t immune. Sometimes, the new releases keep coming after an author’s demise. V.C. Andrews is a good example. As one blogger notes, Andrews “might be the most prolific posthumous author around, having released over a dozen books since her death.” The whole thing has an awkward quality, like those soap opera characters that keep popping up to give advice even after they’ve died. We know it’s an obvious stunt, but we keep watching (and reading) anyway.

But would we be so quick to accept the tactic at a concert? Suppose, for instance, that you’ve bought a ticket to see Lady Gaga perform. Her picture is splashed all over the posters and her name is on the ticket, but when you get there, someone else comes out and sings. Sure, Lady Gaga takes the stage to welcome her fans and she even takes a bow at the end. Essentially, though, it would be the same as ghostwriting: the star takes the credit for somebody else’s work, and everyone pretends not to notice.

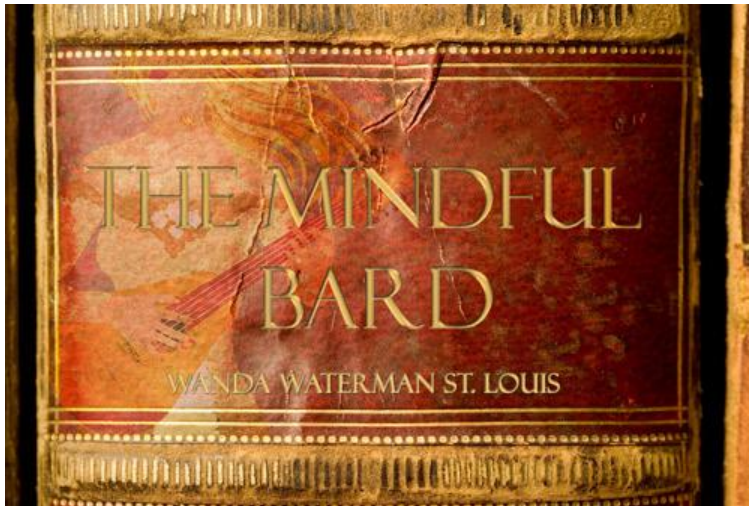
Somehow, it’s hard to imagine music fans sitting still for it, whether they’re downloading songs or buying concert tickets. Or that sports fans would watch their favourite player wave from the sidelines while a “ghost-quarterback” puts on his jersey and plays in the Super Bowl.

All you need to do is remember certain lip-synching scandals, from Milli Vanilli to Britney Spears, to have some idea of how well it would go over. And those artists weren’t even using other people’s voices—they just weren’t performing live with their own.

Clearly, in almost every other endeavour, we expect the real deal. Our singers and athletes and dancers do the work they’re taking credit for, not their understudies or replacements. Coaches and trainers guide them, much as an editor helps polish a writer’s work, but the work is their own.

Perhaps ghostwriting is different because so much of the “performance” takes place unseen. I truly don’t know, and it would probably take a team of sociologists to figure it out. All I do know is that whenever a frantically busy politician or celebrity manages to sit down and craft a book while simultaneously jetting around the world, appearing on TV shows, or running for election, I can’t help getting the strange feeling that, somewhere, there’s a ghostwriter in the machine.





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

Album: Preservation: An Album to Benefit Preservation Hall & the Preservation Hall Music Outreach Program

Musicians: Louis Armstrong, Andrew Bird, Terence Blanchard, Pete Seeger, Dr. John, Blind Boys of Alabama, Brandi Carlile, Cory Chisel, Ani DiFranco, Steve Earle, Merle Haggard, Richie Havens, Jason Isbell, Jim James, Angelique Kidjo, Amy LaVere, Del McCoury, Bobby McFerrin, Buddy Miller, Paolo

Nutini, Tom Waits, and the Preservation Hall Jazz Band

Preservation Hall Recordings, 2010

Ageless Rollicking Tunes Dancing on Story Street and Down the Magic Length of Time

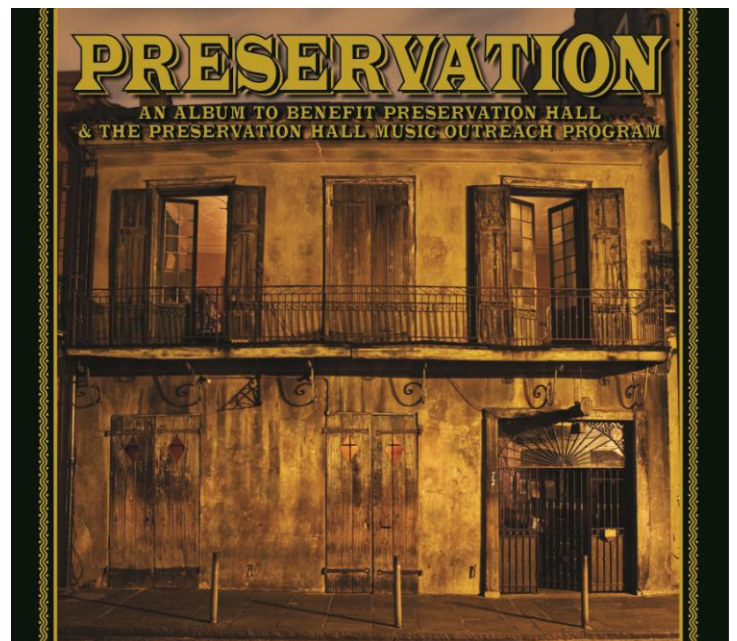
"New Orleans is the only place I know of where you ask a little kid what he wants to be and instead of saying 'I want to be a policeman' or 'I want to be a fireman,' he says, 'I want to be a musician.'"

Alan Jaffe

Allan and Sandra Jaffe founded Preservation Hall in 1961 to provide a performance space for New Orleans jazz musicians. The Preservation Hall organization, now directed by their son Ben Jaffe, evolved into a significant means of protecting and nurturing the hallowed but living tradition of New Orleans jazz. They employ several creative ways of achieving this, including sponsoring an in-house band and providing musical education to the young by means of their musical outreach program.

Amid all the quaintness that many associate with Dixieland music, it's easy to forget that today's musicians and composers owe a massive debt to New Orleans and hold a huge stake in the continuation of its musical tradition.

It's a motley crew here, but every singer on this album loves New Orleans. These amazing artists donated their time to this album to raise money for the Hall and the outreach program. The recording was done in the Hall itself, accompanied by the Preservation Hall Jazz Band, on a set of classic Dixieland tunes. The Preservation Hall Jazz Band (composed of musicians who are all amazing artists themselves) has a long-standing reputation for brilliant playing, true to the genre yet bursting with vitality.



What's especially remarkable is that these performers remain so true to tradition while still allowing their personal styles to shine; in fact, it sometimes seems that, couched in the band's buoyant call and response, the individual musical styles are especially salient.

How, for example can Tom Waits sing "Tootie Ma is a Big Fine Thing" and make it sound exactly like something he would have written himself? (Incidentally, the Hall has ingeniously released this as a 78 record, pretty apt when you consider that this is one of the first Mardi Gras songs ever recorded, in 1955 by Danny Barker and his Creole Cats, on 78 vinyl.)

This resonance would suggest that every one of these performers owes a heap of thanks to the sub-genre we call New Orleans jazz, which, in its structure as well as its sense of triumph in adversity, has had a great influence on American—and world—music.

Big kudos all around to Ben Jaffe and his cohorts at the Hall for putting this album together. This kind of endeavour gives New Orleans tradition a firm enough footing to keep it parading the globe indefinitely.

Preservation manifests six of The Mindful Bard's criteria for music well worth a listen: 1) it is authentic, original, and delightful; 2) it makes me want to be a better artist; 3) it gives me tools that aid my art; 4) it is about attainment of the true self; 5) it provides respite from a sick and cruel world, a respite enabling me to renew myself for a return to mindful artistic endeavour; and 6) it harmoniously unites art with social action, saving me from both seclusion in an ivory tower and slavery to someone else's political agenda.

Preservation was recommended to The Mindful Bard by Josh Peck of Bear River, Nova Scotia.



DID YOU KNOW? Write Site

As the semester progresses, assignments and essays start piling up. And although many find their coursework stimulating and rewarding, it's frequently the writing process that's the biggest challenge. But there's hope: if academic writing is your Achilles heel—or even if you just want some clarification on when to use a semicolon—consider visiting Athabasca University's Write Site, a fantastic resource offering a wide variety of writing aids.

The online resource, intended both for struggling students and for those who want a refresher, was created to “develop independent writers . . . and . . . encourage and support good student writing across the University.”

Resources range from a grammar handbook to guides on the essay writing process and the art of critical thinking and writing. There are also quizzes and drills for further practice.

In addition, Write Site offers personal assistance through its writing coach program. Students can submit a coursework assignment, and a writing coach will provide them with feedback on grammar, mechanics, organization, style, and research and critical thinking skills. Coaches will not edit assignments or comment on their content, however. Further guidelines for the Writing Coach Dropbox can be found here.



*From
Where
I Sit*
Hazel Anaka

Piece of Cake

As life settles back to what we laughingly refer to as normal, I'm amazed at the number and complexity of thoughts and actions that have consumed us for the past few weeks. We can thank adrenaline, the urgency created by the relentless march of time, and a strong work ethic for getting us through. Most people have the resilience and skill to handle what's thrown at them—at least in the short term. However, prolonged stress can and does kill; if not immediately, then surely in the long term.

Let me recap what's been running through my mind and life in the last few weeks. Monday saw Roy elected as county councillor after a month of door knocking while trying to bring in the harvest. He was successful in defeating the incumbent (who was in office for 12 years) and two other challengers. Waiting an hour for results from one small poll nearly did me in. This is the same position I held 15 years ago, so Roy went in with his eyes wide open. For a crash course in human behaviour, seek public office. It is a privilege. It is an eye-opener.

Because the farm work continues with baling, hauling bales and grain, and field work, there hasn't even been time to savour the victory and catch up on some sleep. Hopefully, that too will happen soon.

On issues a little further from home, I regret that I couldn't actually watch the Chilean mine rescue but had to settle for radio reports. Like a billion other people, I was mesmerized by the stories and sub-plots intrinsic in this unbelievable drama. The dynamics of what went on both down there and up on terra firma intrigue me. My friend's husband is a gold miner working in Indonesia, and frankly, I can't fathom anyone going underground.

In one sense, I wish I was still ensconced in the combine and away from media as the Colonel Russell Williams trial unfolds in Ontario. The details of perversion and depravity remind me of the Bernardo-Homolka trials of the 1990s or the serial murders of sex trade workers committed by Robert Pickton. I can only pray that the people affected by these two new murders, sexual assaults, and sex-fuelled break-ins will be able, with help, to survive the horror of what they've experienced. Williams is just the latest example of evil personified.

So there you have it—the resilience spectrum: from playing catch-up after harvest and an election to grieving a heinous public murder; from tackling a to-do list of delayed tasks to wondering if you'll ever see daylight and breathe fresh air again.

Now I just need to refill a prescription that lapsed, attend a day-long grief conference, babysit my awesome grandson, attend a session on the role of an executor, keep a couple of specialist appointments, plan a first-time food event, and assume a new role in the travel publication business. Piece of cake, from where I sit.

CHRONICLES OF CRUISCIN LAN

Wanda Waterman St. Louis



INTERNATIONAL NEWS DESK



At Home: Who's the Boss?

The bad or clueless boss is so frequently the subject of comic strips, and sitcoms that it's become cliché. However, it might be time to revise that impression.

As the CBC reports, bosses appear to be getting better. A recent survey of 2,000 adult employees shows that Canadians gave their bosses a satisfaction score of 59.7 out of 100—a substantial increase over 2005's result of 47.5.

The increased satisfaction levels indicate that employer-employee relations may be a little less strained. More specifically, the study showed that “bosses improved most in the areas of acknowledging their mistakes, and being a born leader.” And highest-ranked trait was managers' ability to communicate their expectations to their employees.

Still, though, there's room for improvement; employees didn't think quite as highly of managers' ability to “help . . . employees reach their potential.”

But as Peter Gilfillan, general manager for the Canadian arm of Monster.com, the online job search giant that commissioned the survey, it's a “clear message . . . [that] bosses are getting better.”

Around the World: Liar, Liar

Another top-level business stereotype: lying CEOs. But when CEOs fib or tell outright untruths about the condition of their companies, they hurt a lot more than their employees. The business scandals of the past few years have taught us that a few lies can cause financial ruin for company shareholders.

But there's no need to hide your money in a sock. As NPR News reports, a new Stanford University study suggests that it's possible to determine “when senior executives are fibbing,” and even to “predict those companies that are likely to have problems.”

The study examined transcripts from corporate earnings calls, during which “CEOs and chief financial officers take questions from analysts,” and noted which companies were later forced to “restate earnings.”

Researchers found that clear trends emerged. One, as Stanford accounting professor and study co-author David Larcker told reporters, is the tendency of lying CEOs to avoid “answering the question” directly.

Also to look out for: executives who avoid personal blame by using words like “we,” “us,” and “our team.” Overexuberant cheerleading is another red flag.

Besides protecting shareholders, the research has potential for application in day-to-day life. As Larcker told reporters, “I think since the Garden of Eden we've been trying to figure this out — who's lying and who's not lying.”

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.



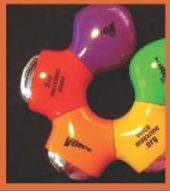



For any course that requires charts that cannot be easily created in Word or Excel, this should be a real time saver and make it easier to submit all portions of an assignment by email.

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

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

THE VOICE

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