

THE VOICE

MAGAZINE

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War and Peace

A veteran remembers

The Book Thief

Paying the price

Open Season

Fighting the flu

*Plus: In Conversation With . . ., Gregor's Bed,
From Where I Sit, and much more . . .*



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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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comments to voice@voicemagazine.org, and please
indicate if we may publish your letter.



REMEMBERING . . . AFGHANISTAN

Maximilian L. Birkner



Last year, I celebrated Remembrance Day in Afghanistan, 20,000 km from my home in Vancouver, BC. We got up at five in the morning and left our Forward Operating Base to do a routine patrol, and at noon, when we came back dusty and soaked beneath our body armour, there was a short parade in the vehicle parking lot. Wreaths were laid down near a large Canadian flag made of spray-painted stones on the side of a hill. The poem about Flanders Fields was read, and some short speeches were made. Every soldier stood rock-still in the tan desert uniform, sweat forming beneath bush caps. My loaded machine gun weighed heavily on its sling.

The next day was very long. Our platoon had been outside the wire for several hours to investigate a suspected roadside bomb when a call came; we had to scramble back in the vehicles to go and help some soldiers at a base five kilometres down the road. It's not unusual to do five kilometres in nine hours in a place like Afghanistan, due to threats and obstacles, but that night we raced, the armoured vehicles lighting up the road with white light, not blacked out the way they usually are. When we got to the site, we found that some soldiers had been wounded and that one of our engineers had lost his foot to a mine and had been evacuated by helicopter to Kandahar Airfield.

I returned from deployment in May after seven months of intense work, several life-and-death scenarios, hilarious raunchy humour, mistrust of certain commanders, and an often subtle but ever-present fear of death. In many ways they were the greatest months of my life so far—hundreds of tiny lessons and several large ones compressed into a very short period. My memories from that time have left in my mind footprints that will likely never leave me.

But every once in a while I sit very still and think quietly about the 13 soldiers who died during my time in-country—and also about the ones who came home permanently wounded (there are many who get very badly hurt but are never written about in the media). A few times over there I remember sitting on my bunk on base, or in the dirt when we were out on extended operations. I remember getting ready to sleep, or having just woken up, and looking very quietly at my feet or hands and seeing their every detail—pores and hairs and tendons and callouses—and thinking about what a beautiful thing an extremity is and how much I would miss one if I lost it.

This year for Remembrance Day, I'm back in Vancouver. I've taken a six-month leave of absence from the Reserves, but will still be wearing my uniform and the medal from my time in the desert. It's very strange to be called a veteran; the title has always evoked for me, and for many other Canadians, the thought of our grandfathers in their uniforms and



the racks of medals from Europe and Korea and certain peacekeeping missions. What we tend to forget is how young many of those people were when they served. The same age, or younger, as the new generation of veterans who are returning from today's battlefields.

[T]he abstract figures we read about in books . . . were all people too, with lives and families . . . [not] extras in a Hollywood movie.

In the next few years, Canadians will see a small but significant increase in the number of young men and women whose lives have been affected by modern conflict. While the casualty rates of the war in Afghanistan pale in comparison to those from the wars that were fundamental to the maturation of a young Canada, they are no less significant.

One thing I learned overseas is that people are people, no matter where they come from, why they are in a certain place, or what they believe. There is something very good about seeing an Afghan child laughing, running, and falling and scraping his knee, and seeing the Canadian man ahead of you on patrol, a father of children halfway

around the globe, taking the kid by the hand and helping him up.

I came to understand that the abstract figures we read about in books—those thousands of soldiers who went over the top at Vimy or Passchendaele—they were all people too, with lives and families. Now that the memory has faded, we honour them and talk about the sacrifice they made for King and Country and Duty, as if that was a thing that those soldiers thought about when they were sitting in their soaking wet trenches, wondering if they would survive the day. What we forget so easily when with our good intentions we immortalize them, thinking of them as we think of extras in a Hollywood movie, is that the one thing every one of those soldiers wanted was to come home—to survive the war.

The only way to thank those soldiers properly is to weep for them—to thank their souls sincerely and to take time to think about them, if only for one day in a whole calendar year. Not because they gave their lives, but because they lost them. Because every one of those soldiers who never made it home would have given anything to be here in Canada right now, 80 years old and watching his grandkids grow up.

Think about that on Remembrance Day. Think about the Canadian soldiers who are, at this moment, engaged in situations that the majority of the population cannot come close to imagining: the numbness of a compassionate mind after witnessing death, the fear of bombs beneath the flying dust around their boots, and the feeling of clenching every muscle when the vehicle they're in drives over a culvert in the road.

Think about that. And this week, wherever you are, if you see someone in uniform, or one alone in a crowd, wearing a medal on the breast of a plain, civilian-patterned shirt or blazer—whether they're young and their hair is getting long because they just got out of the army, or they're 80 years old and walking with a cane—go up and thank them. Don't ask too many questions or seek out stories. Just thank them.



HEALTH MATTERS

Katie D'Souza

**What To Do About Colds and Flu?**

It's that time of year again—the change of seasons and influx of cooler weather are causing everyone around me to catch colds or the flu. Help! What can I do to keep my family well?

Happily, there are many natural options from which to choose.

First of all, check out your lifestyle. This one's not optional! If those 10 trillion cells in your body are functioning well, chances are they might be able to evade infection. Are you providing your body with grassroots nutrition? If your diet is lacking in fruits and vegetables (you need the Canada Food Guide's recommended total seven to ten servings of fruits and vegetables daily) or protein (your immune system needs adequate protein to function properly), you'll want to change your diet around.

Review your other habits, too. If you're getting eight solid hours of good-quality sleep in the total dark—with no computer or TV screen glowing—you're likely okay here. And don't forget about

exercise; at the very least, you should aim to exercise aerobically a minimum of three times per week, for at least 30 minutes per session. For example, you could walk, cycle, swim, or dance; these aerobic forms of activity use the large muscle groups, and provide cardioprotective benefit.

In addition to lifestyle changes, certain supplemental vitamins can be helpful. Vitamin D, for instance, is exploding as the new super-researched vitamin. The number of positive studies linking vitamin D use and immunity are impressive! Essentially, vitamin D increases the activity of natural killer cells in the body, and also improves macrophage activity (macrophages “swallow” and thus destroy invading germs). Additionally, adequate vitamin D levels are correlated with increased amounts of an antimicrobial peptide in the body; again, the end target here is destroying unwanted invaders.

Finally, check out this plant: astragalus (*Astragalus membranaceus*). Astragalus originated in Asia, and its root is a potent antimicrobial and can ward off infections (especially colds and flus). It's one of my favourite herbs! Many Asians make a “change of season soup” to stay well when fall arrives, and one of its medicinal ingredients is astragalus. But a note of caution: those who are immunosuppressed should consult their practitioner before supplementing with astragalus.

You can surge through this year's cold and flu season, armed and ready!

Dear Dr. Katie,

I'm sick with a cold—yet again. Is there anything natural that I can take to recover more quickly than last time?

It's rarely enjoyable to be ill. However, there's good news: there are many things you can do naturally to help your body recover quickly, and also, very importantly, recover fully.

You could try using botanical medicine. Certain plants have pharmacological properties and exert physiological influences on the body. In other words, these plants' naturally occurring compounds may, according to scientific studies and traditional herbal wisdom, help you get well more speedily.

What plants might do the trick? Many of us have heard of echinacea (*Echinacea spp.*), a perennial coneflower plant. When you're sick, your body relies on its white blood cells, part of the immune system, to fight the infection. Echinacea boosts your body's white blood cell count, meaning a more effective battle against the illness.



[R]emember that getting well and staying healthy involves more than popping pills. Don't forget the valuable contributions of diet and exercise!

A lesser-known plant is the elder plant. Its small yet juicy, blackish-purple berries are high in anthocyanins (compounds that stimulate immune activity) and good old vitamin C. For adults, a dose of two tablespoons daily of the crushed berries offers potent antiviral activity. Colds and flus, beware!

And don't forget to give your diet a quick review. Although a healthy diet most likely won't create an instant sick-to-well change, it will give your body the nutritional power it needs to fight the infection more effectively. For example, minerals like zinc (found in foods like chicken, oysters, and pumpkin seeds) help the body keep certain immune system cells at optimal levels for fighting infection. If there's

no zinc, the white blood cells can't work effectively, either.

Whatever you choose, remember that getting well and staying healthy involves more than popping pills. Don't forget the valuable contributions of diet and exercise!

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.

IN CONVERSATION WITH . . .

Wanda Waterman St. Louis

Jesse David Weeks

Jesse David Weeks is a Toronto-based singer-songwriter who also happens to be a police officer. The title track of his debut release, "Somewhere in the Distance," co-written by Paul Burns, won the Grand Prize in the 2010 Astral Media Radio Star National Songwriting Competition. His father, Gary Weeks, toured with the Stampeders as part of Gary & Dave ("Could You Ever Love Me Again"). Recently, Jesse talked to the Voice about music, religion, and writing songs in his head while driving.



Raps, Beats, Lyrics

I started writing rap lyrics when I was about twelve. Others provided the beats and music. Once I broke away from rap and started writing pop material, I then had the added factor of creating a melody. Shortly after . . . I learned how to play guitar so I could write my own original lyrics, melody, and music.

Melody is the most interesting factor of the three; a good melody comes with much trial, error, and tweaking by singing or humming random tunes until something seems right for the specific idea. Once I have something that I think works, I hum or sing it into a digital voice recorder so I don't forget it.

Childhood Influences

I was born in Toronto and lived in Greektown until age four, when my family moved to Ireland. My parents were missionaries at the time. I lived in Cork and Limerick in Ireland until returning to Canada at age eleven. I went to high school in Markham, a suburb of Toronto, and lived there until age 22, when I moved to downtown Toronto, where I currently reside.

I am the middle of three boys. Although my parents were missionaries during most of my childhood, they had so many other life experiences that rubbed off on me. My dad would often incorporate his gifts of music into his Bible teaching by singing Christian songs that complemented his message. My mom was once a flight attendant and often shared her love of travel, which has also rubbed off. (I'm writing this email on a plane from Macau, China to Tokyo, Japan.)

I would also add that I have travelled all over the world and Jasper, Alberta is my favourite place . . . I love it there. If I develop any kind of following in Alberta, I will be quick to set up some shows there and include a vacation to Jasper.

What conditions do you need in your life in order to be creative?

I find I am most creative, specifically with melodies, while driving alone on a highway. I write the best lyrics and music at home, usually. However, I have written parts of songs on planes, during downtime in a police

car, co-writing with other writers, and many other places, I'm sure. I have many scraps of paper and napkins from jotting down lyric ideas from over the years.

Are there any books, albums, or films that have been landmarks in your creative development, i.e. have inspired your own development and work?

My earliest influences are Phil Collins, Michael Jackson, Queen, and a myriad of oldies from the 60s and 70s. A specific album, *But Seriously* by Phil Collins, is the only album that really stands out, but there were many singles that shaped me. I was also very influenced by a few years in the 90s, when hip hop artists began including melodic hooks and female singers in their songs. I really enjoyed the blend of sounds that began the trend we now see manifested in such artists as Chris Brown, Taio Cruz, Black Eyed Peas, and Beyoncé. I enjoy pop music that has structured, rhythmic, lyrical phrasing. I think that has to do with my rap background.

Does your social conscience affect your work in any way?

My social conscience greatly affects my work. I'd say at least 25 per cent of my songs are spawned from my social consciousness. "Bloodshed In Our Streets," "Year of The Gun," "We Wanna Be Free," and recently, "World Peace" and "Rockets Rain," are examples.

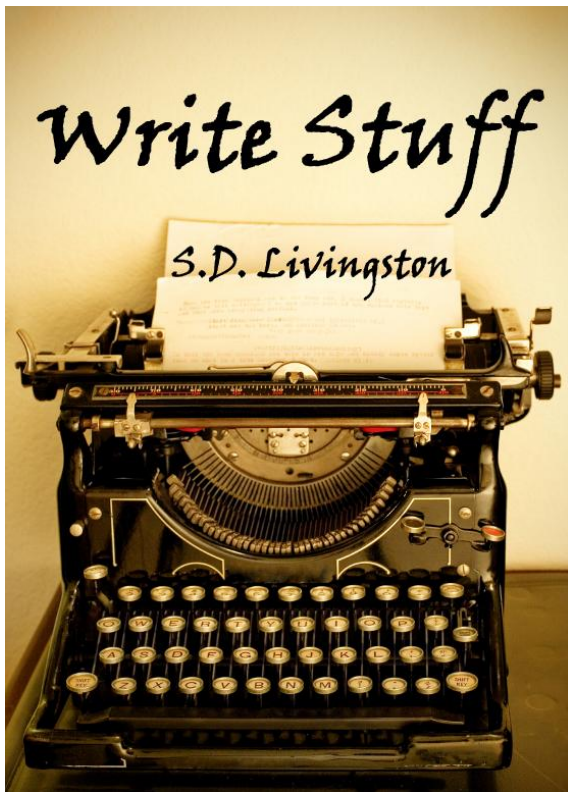
Has life as a musician/composer had any impact on your social conscience? Have your eyes been opened to things you hadn't noticed before?

This is the toughest question. If anything, I try to stop myself from falling prey to my own biases and prejudices. Being an artist and understanding the value of art gives me incentive to be a part of any movement that seeks a better climate for artists. For example, I am opposed to the CRTC desire to reduce the amount of CanCon [that] radio is required to air (this is ludicrous). I think Canada's copyright laws in relation to digital file sharing and monetizing models need to be updated. I think there should be more transparency and less biased decision-making within music funding organizations.

Ideology

As for religious views, I am a follower of Jesus Christ. My faith has always been a big part of my life and I desire to stay active in my spiritual zeal. While I am by no means a preacher like my dad, I do greatly enjoy discussing religion with people who, like me, have a genuine interest in gaining a deeper understanding of life's big questions.





Indefensible

It's been a strange week indeed in the world of the written word. The phrase "But honestly, Monica" spread like wildfire (in spite of it, you can bet that some people, somewhere, still believe that everything on the Internet is public domain). Meanwhile, disgruntled readers began flooding Amazon with one-star reviews to protest agency pricing. And amid all the commotion came the strangest news of all: apparently, if you think the price of something is too high, it's okay to steal it.

Thud. Yes, that is the sound of my head hitting the desk as I ponder those words. The logic goes like this: *I don't like the price, so my only choice is to steal it. In fact, the store is forcing me to steal it!*

Believe it or not, that's the theme running through a shocking number of online comments. Much of the ire has to do with the cost of e-books, but the argument's being used to justify the theft of music and films, too.

It's neatly summed up in this user comment from the Amazon UK forums, nicely spotted by The Bookseller [blog](#): ". . . the only real way to fight back is to start looking on the bit torrent sites for the novels one wants to read . . ." The same poster goes on to explain that it's okay to steal music, saying, "Not many records are sold today but we all know the music we like and we all listen to it."

Thud (ouch). First of all, a little bit of research goes a long way. The physical manufacturing and distribution costs only account for "about 12% of a physical book's retail price," as publishing CEO Michael Hyatt [explains](#) in this very accessible post.

Secondly, the flurry of new developments in e-publishing—and the highly publicized issue of agency pricing—means that book prices are all over the map right now, and it will likely be a few weeks until prices of both paper and e-books settle down and some of those gaps are adjusted.

But the most astonishing thing about that reader's comment is the sheer, mind-boggling, self-righteous defence of theft.

Seriously? The price is too high, so you have no choice but to steal something? Let's take that logic and apply it to a physical product—say your favourite Starbucks beverage. Perhaps a Grande Cinnamon Dolce Latte. Or maybe you'd really like a pair of Manolo Blahnik pumps.

To some people these are affordable luxuries, but to others they're outrageously overpriced. Following the logic of the book and music thieves, it's okay to steal those shoes or that latte if you think the price is too high. If the manufacturers and retailers won't lower the price to suit you, it's like they're not even giving you a choice. You have to steal the stuff.

What an egregious, self-serving load of crap. Much like the latest bestselling novel and hot music downloads, neither of these items is essential to life. It's true that music and literature are vital to our psychological

and societal health, but there are many legitimate ways to read and listen to your heart's content, such as libraries, Project Gutenberg, or music and book downloads that the artist has *chosen* to give away.

We might crave that latte or a boxed set of *The Big Bang Theory*, but it's hardly going to kill us if we can't have them.

So here's a better idea. If you want to protest the price of e-books (or DVDs or designer shoes), don't buy them. Heck, boycott the retailer if you want to. Send them a letter or email telling them you think their prices are too high. Blog about it. Post comments at the retailer's website. Talk to your friends.

Just don't pretend you have no choice but to steal.

CLICK OF THE WRIST: The Memories Live On

The trouble with history is that it's often seen with too wide a scope. We focus so much on themes, patterns, social mores, and events, that we often lose sight of the fact that the historical canvas is made up of many, many individuals—each with a unique story. This week, when we focus on remembering those whose sacrifices in the past and present have allowed us the freedoms we enjoy today, we take a step closer and examine in more detail the reality of who these men and women really were.

Letters from the Past

There's no better way to know people as individuals than through their unofficial, personal correspondence, and the History Department of Vancouver Island University recognizes that. Its Canadian Letters and Images Project has compiled letters and documents in an effort to provide an "online archive of the Canadian war experience." Collections include correspondence from Korea and World Wars I and II, as well as from earlier periods (like the Riel Rebellion and the US Civil War).

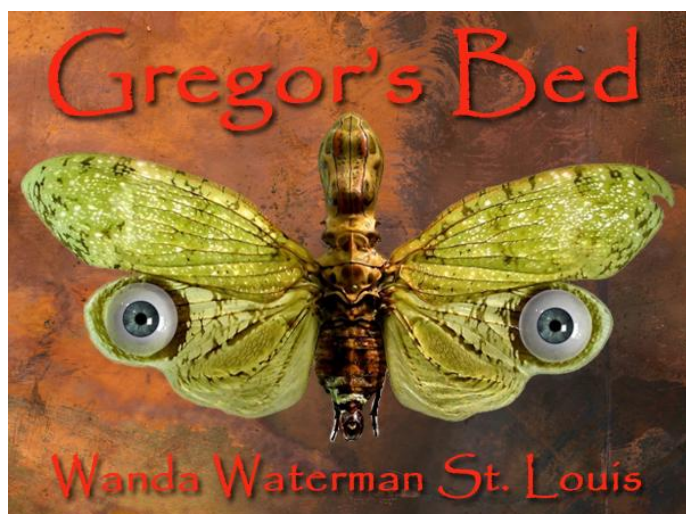
A Thousand Words

Sometimes the best way to tell a story is through pictures. This Queen's University online archive of World War I photos includes many close-up as well as distant shots, and the commentary provides a historical and social context for the shots.

In Verse

Where thoughts, feelings, and emotions rise beyond the level tolerated by simple prose, many turn to the poetic realm. This online collection of World War I poetry, first published as *The Muse in Arms* in 1917, contains over 130 poems by both famous and unknown poets. Poignantly, as the introduction points out, a number of the poets included didn't survive the war.





Intriguing New Trends in Music

"It takes a lot of time to be a genius, you have to sit around so much doing nothing, really doing nothing."

Gertrude Stein

"The insane, on occasion, are not without their charms."

Kurt Vonnegut, Jr.

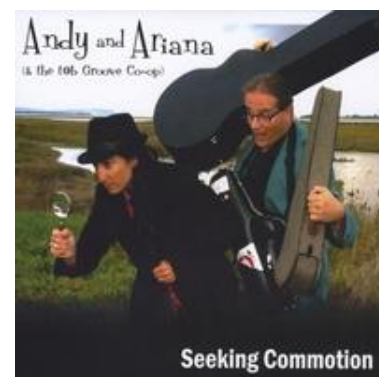
Andy and Ariana: *Seeking Commotion* (2010)

My two favourite mad geniuses (formerly known as T@b; read the *Voice* interview with singer Andy Flinn

here) have done it again, putting out one more song set that's so deliciously good it keeps their feet steady on that uphill creative trajectory.

The lyrics of "Sakini Maikhana" (a brilliantly poetic meditation on illusory freedom) were written by Ariana's dad, Amin, in Dari, an Afghan dialect of Persian. The rest of the songs were penned mostly by Andy, and the arrangements, served up by a group of superlatively inventive musicians, are a great mix of more genres and styles than you can shake a bow at (including Celtic, folk, bluegrass, country, gypsy jazz, ragtime, calypso, and Middle Eastern), layered over Andy and Ariana's unique brand of polyrhythmic jazz.

This is an exuberant album: intelligent but lively, and socially conscious but without taking itself too seriously.



Cybiont: *Cybiont 3: Music from a Living Universe & Dark Side of My Spoon*

2010

The first few bars into Cybiont's music, and you're hit with the realness of it; it's so authentic it practically lactates, which is one reason why Gregor recommended Cybiont's last album, *Angels & Demons*, back in July. This new CD is no slouch either, delivering all the evocative thrills and twists and turns of altered consciousness you can achieve this side of dropping acid.

In the lyrics you can really hear the influence of French thinker Joël de Rosnay, whose philosophy is basically an optimistic one: he asserts that the next evolutionary step is the formation of a giant brain made out of—well, practically everything. And even if you think the theory is cracked, you have to admit it presents a fascinating realm of exploration, especially if the belief is as sincere as Cybiont's and the landscape is described as invitingly.

The instrumentation as well as the bits and pieces are highly eclectic, but Cybiont doesn't throw the whole pantry into the pot and call himself a chef; every element is chosen with care and with a sharp intuition of what will work. His art is as integrated as his philosophy.

Such optimism is delightfully incongruous in music whose general tone recalls the darker, darker elements of Nick Cave, The Cure, and the Velvet Underground.

Just watch what happens to music now.

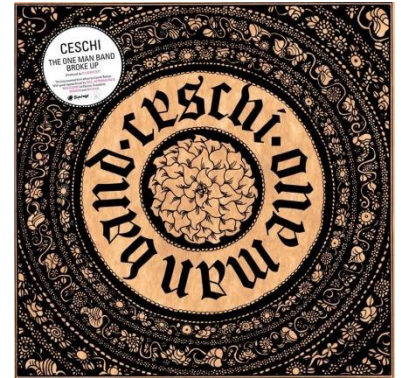
Ceschi: *The One Man Band Broke Up* (Equinox 2010)

It has often been said that irony appears when cultures are in decline, and if *The One Man Band Broke Up* is any indication, hip hop—as a genre that can continue to vivify and influence the course of pop culture—is now finally sliding down an inclined plane. The slide is a spectacular one.

It's easy to take this album seriously; it's so carefully put together, so true to the genre, and so creative. At the same time, it all seems like an artfully constructed satire.

There's a rich mulligatawny here: a Tom Waits sampling, hip hop words coming so fast they sound like staccato triplets, a tea kettle whistling, someone sneezing, vacuous inter-track patter between band and producer, some folksy white boy sentimental acoustic strums and crooning, and a host of other special little touches that make this one a repeater.

With conspicuously literary lyrics paired off with gutter language and an anthemic title track that's hilariously funny—and disgustingly graphic—about the seediness of the hip hop entertainer's life, it's guaranteed to leave you either with your mouth hanging open or clutching your sides with laughter.



DID YOU KNOW? Holiday Exam Procedures

If your course contract ends on December 31, 2010 you'll want to note Athabasca University's special holiday procedures for requesting and writing final exams.

Because the University will be closed for the holidays at 4:30 pm MST on Thursday, December 23, 2010 (it will reopen 8:30 am MST on Tuesday, January 4, 2011), it has created specific provisions to ensure adequate time

for exams to arrive and be completed. Students may be eligible for additional time in which to write their exams.

If you are not writing your exam at the Athabasca, Edmonton, or Calgary campuses and you request it by December 12, 2010, you will be "allowed additional time for exam completion without being charged the Late Examination Request fee." Exams must be written by January 15, 2011.

If you request your exam after December 12, 2010, but before the course contract end date of December 31, 2010, you must pay a Late Exam Request Fee (\$100). The fee must accompany the request. These exams must be written by January 31, 2011.

For further information, including special provisions for those writing at AU's Athabasca, Calgary, or Edmonton campuses, see the full [regulations](#) or call the Information Centre at 1.800.788.9041.



From Where I Sit

Hazel Anaka

Remember

On November 11, Roy and I will again be present for the Remembrance Day ceremonies here in our small village. As a newly elected councillor in the rural municipality in which we live, Roy will likely be expected to take part in the program by making a speech and laying a wreath on behalf of the county.

In past years, we simply parked our car near the cenotaph located at the south end of Main Street and joined the others gathered to pay their respects. The weather is normally somewhere between cold and damn cold. There is usually a brisk wind that forces collars up and hands shoved deeper into the pockets of winter jackets. Noses and cheeks turn red, but we all survive. It is, after all, such a tiny bit of inconvenience or discomfort. There are no IEDs or foxholes or shell casings here.

Each year, a tour bus of military personnel and some family members come from Edmonton Garrison to take part in our program. Young boys and girls from the local air cadet squadron, an RCMP member, a piper, and political dignitaries join them in a march from the village office to the cenotaph.

Already in place at the cenotaph are four members of the army and air force, each in position at the corners of the concrete pad. During the march, wreath laying, and moments of silence, they stand motionless—one foot slightly in front of the other, and white-gloved hands steadying the business end of a rifle which is resting on the toe of their boot. Their heads are bowed. The dress uniform and either beret or wedge cap seem woefully inadequate for the weather. Yet they hold their positions, and I am awed.

For the comfort of all concerned, the crowd moves to the community hall, where the remainder of the program takes place. Here, the rest of the wreaths are laid by representatives of various clubs, organizations, and businesses. Each person laying a wreath is accompanied by a young air cadet

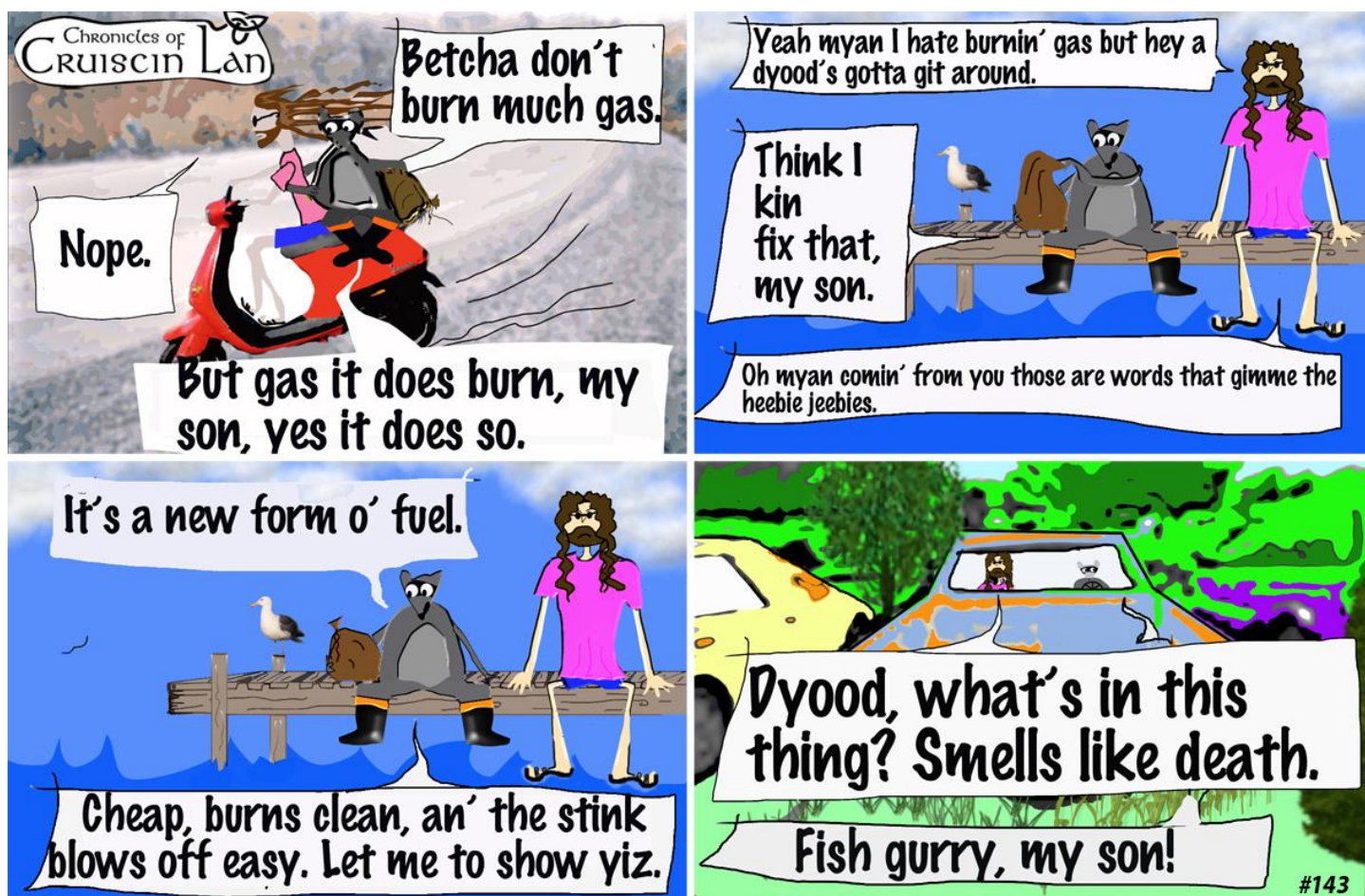
in the short walk from the back of the room to the makeshift memorial in the centre of the hall. Dignitaries bring greetings; a member of the clergy offers a benediction. Finally, all those present view some displays and enjoy a hot meal and time of fellowship.

And through all this, from the time I leave home until the time I return, I feel tears stinging my eyes and threatening to roll down my cheeks, betraying my emotions. I think about the people, mothers especially, who have lost someone in combat. I thank the Lord that neither of my kids felt driven to join the military. In the next breath, I say thank you to those people who do make that choice. Their sacrifice is without measure.

And finally, I'm glad that each year across Canada, there seem to be more Remembrance Day activities, involvement, and tributes to help us do the very least we can do: Remember. Just another reason to tear up, from where I sit.

CHRONICLES OF CRUISCIN LAN

Wanda Waterman St. Louis



GREEN LIGHT

News, Tips, and Tricks for a Healthy Planet

Let It Shine



If the sun's an energy powerhouse—theoretically generating so much that what reaches us in one hour could meet our electricity needs for a year—then why aren't we making more use of it? Why are we still so dependent on other forms of power generation?

Unfortunately, plugging into the sun isn't as simple as it might sound (for one thing, as the Shel Silverstein poem goes, "the cord ain't long enough"). The technology for capturing and transmitting solar radiation is often complicated and expensive to develop and produce. And although generating solar power will eventually pay off in terms of electricity costs, it can take 20 years for those financial benefits to show up.

But although on paper solar electricity costs much more, the negative effects of "traditionally" produced electricity are often costly, and rarely factor into the balance when comparing the two.

This excellent *National Geographic* [article](#) discusses the economics of solar power production in further detail.

INTERNATIONAL NEWS DESK



At Home: Bilingual Benefits

It's no secret that bilingualism is beneficial; it creates the possibility of higher earnings potential and offers cultural insights that are worth their weight in gold. But now there's another area which a second language can benefit: your brain.

As the *CBC reports*, new research suggests that bilingualism may strengthen the brain to better cope with the effects of aging. In fact, according to the study, "picking up a second language may help delay the onset of Alzheimer's symptoms."

Although learning a second language won't necessarily stave off dementia, it may help to soften the blow. The results of the study, which compared the records of over 200 Alzheimer's patients (half bilingual and half monolingual), show that the patients who had "spoken two or more languages consistently over many years experienced a delay in the onset of their symptoms." In some cases, the delay was up to five years.

As Dr. Fergus Craik, who led the study, explained to reporters, fluency in more than one language allows the brain to store up a "cognitive reserve." These reserves allow the brain to "cope better when Alzheimer's symptoms hit."

Around the World: Revisiting Pompeii

The wonder of Pompeii—the city buried by the eruptions of Mount Vesuvius in A.D. 79—has enthralled historians, anthropologists, and architects for years. Until recently, the prevailing theory was that volcanic ash and poisonous gases from the eruption caused Pompeii's inhabitants to suffocate where they stood. A new study, however, turns this assumption on its head.

As the *National Geographic Daily News reports*, the research concluded that most of the residents "died instantly of extreme heat, with many casualties shocked into a sort of instant rigor mortis."

To re-examine the historical eruption, volcanologists analyzed the volcanic ash and rock covering the city and created a computer simulation. The results suggested that in fact most of Pompeii's inhabitants perished before much of the ash ever reached them.

Instead, one of several surges of "hot, toxic gases" hitting the city caused temperature spikes of at least 300°C. Those temperatures, sufficient to melt certain metals and char wood, would have instantly killed the victims.

The researchers corroborated their findings by examining the bones of victims, discovering features consistent with exposure to extreme temperatures.

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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