

# THE VOICE

## MAGAZINE

Vol 18 Iss 50 2010-12-17

### Peace on Earth

Or in the checkout line!

### Worth the Money?

The organics debate

### Mind Games

Playing concentration



*Plus: In Conversation With, From Where I Sit, and much more . . .*

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# LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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



## EDITORIAL

Christina M. Frey

## Wait Five Minutes



“Like a kid at Christmas.” The popular saying conjures up a romanticized image: a couple of sweet children dancing excitedly around the Christmas tree, eyes wide at the pile of presents from Santa, faces alive with the magic and wonder of the season.

But what is a kid at Christmas really like? As parents—whether in films, TV, or real life—will agree, it involves a lot of waiting, a lot of whining, and a lot of when. Specifically, *when will Christmas come? When will Santa get here? When can I eat the cookies? When can I open my presents (it’s already four in the morning on Christmas day, mom!)?*

Oh, those silly kids, we laugh. But wait a minute. Are we much better?

Recently, I was chatting with a group of friends about the stresses of the season. “Ugh, I can’t wait ’til the holidays are over,” someone groaned.

I think we all feel that way at times. ’Tis the season to be stressed out, right? With have-to-make-an-appearance parties, baking and cooking, tense family gatherings, decorating, and long lists of gift expectations all clamouring for our attention, even the fun parts of the holidays start seeming like obligations.

Maybe one of the reasons we’re so strung out come December 25 is that we’ve spent the whole month with our noses to the grindstone, all in frantic anticipation of an idea that we’re too physically and emotionally exhausted to enjoy. We can’t really take pleasure in the small moments of the season because we’re so focused on achieving the perfect holiday. No wonder so many of us slump into the post-Christmas blues when the holidays are over.

This past weekend, I heard something that really struck a chord with me: that our über-connected world has lost the concept of waiting patiently. It makes sense. We’re accustomed to instant gratification in our communications; we can call, text, or email with one touch of a button. Want to know something? Google will have your answers in just a few seconds. Movies, games, music, shopping—all is available instantaneously. With the rising popularity of smart phones, we truly have the whole world in one hand. And whatever we want, we can have *now*.

Of course, problems arise when we start taking our “on-demand” expectations into the physical world, and I think our need-it-now philosophy has spilled into many areas of our lives. It’s especially apparent during the holiday season.

***“There’s . . . a lot [of] frustration, anxiety, and anger during a season that’s supposed to be about peace and love.”***

After all, there are a lot more expectations . . . and a lot more holdups. That means there’s also a lot more frustration, anxiety, and anger during a season that’s supposed to be about peace and love.



For example, how many times this month did we fume silently (or to a friend) when held up at checkout for five minutes too long? Or sneer at the newbie cashier who got our order wrong the first time? Or swear at the driver whose slow speeds meant we got stuck at a red light for a whole 45 seconds?

We already know that in the scheme of things, those short time periods really don't matter. But we've become so accustomed to getting what we want when we want it, that any deviation from that "norm" is cause for frustration and even anger.

Sometimes, we just need to pause and regain our lost perspective.

So this holiday season, let's really savour our time—both the busy and the fast-paced and the slow, "dead" moments. The moments of waiting don't need to be periods of frustration, stress, and the like. They can be opportunities for meditation, for granting a smile or friendly word to a passer-by or fellow shopper, or even for just pausing a moment, closing our eyes, and going inside our minds for a small space of quiet.



Time will march on, and the holidays will soon be over. We won't remember the guy who cut us off in traffic or the indecisive lady in the checkout line. But the little times of quiet, peace, and joy? *Those* are the memories that we'll carry with us long past the season.

## DID YOU KNOW?



### AU's New Web-Based Transfer Credit Search Page

Curious as to how your past coursework might transfer for AU credit? Want to find out whether courses at other universities are equivalent to AU courses, or transferable as AU program requirements?

You'll want to check out AU's new web-based Transfer Credit Search application, which allows "students to search transfer credit decisions at Athabasca University by both course and program."

The user-friendly, online application can be used in three ways: to check how courses you've taken at another institution would transfer to AU, to check the transferability of programs you've taken at another institution, and to "search for AU course equivalents at other institutions."

For further information, see the Transfer Credit Search [help page](#). Or, to access the application and start searching, click [here](#).

## IN CONVERSATION WITH . . .

Wanda Waterman St. Louis

## Meklit Hadero, Part I

*Meklit Hadero is an Ethiopian-born, Los Angeles-based singer-songwriter whose style merges jazz with folk and world music to create deeply sympathetic musical portraits of life's priceless simple moments. Her first full-length CD, On a Day Like This ... , was just released by Porto Franco Records. Meklit recently took the time to chat with Wanda Waterman St. Louis about songwriting, San Francisco, and what it's like to tour while knowing that you have a million places to call home.*



## On a Day Like This

Today I'm having a work-from-home kind of day. Some days are mostly meetings. I normally work at home. I'm just going to practice and work on some new tunes.

## Roots and Rootlessness

I was born in Ethiopia, and from there my family moved to Düsseldorf, Germany, then to Washington, D.C. My first memories are of Iowa City. From there we moved to New York. I went to high school in Gainesville, Florida, spent four years in New Haven, Connecticut, then stayed for brief stints in London and Miami.

I then moved to Seattle because my whole family had moved there from Ethiopia (I had an aunt who was sort of the anchor and brought everybody) while I was in high school. When I graduated from college and was deciding where to move, it was a real opportunity to get to know my family in a way that had been impossible in my younger days. I loved Seattle but found the rain completely depressing.

I ended up in San Francisco because I loved the west coast and wanted to be close to my family. At the same time, about five of my close friends from college were all moving to San Francisco. It was very much an experiment. There was not a lot of "I'm-moving-here-for-this." I was just trying it out.

I feel that all this moving around gave me two things. One was the ability to be super-adaptive, and I think that's really a crucial characteristic. The other is that I have a million different homes, genuine homes. It makes touring really fun because touring is always a reunion and I'm never afraid of new circumstances.



I have friends everywhere and I can make friends everywhere. It depends on your personality; for some people this creates anxiety, but for me it creates calm.

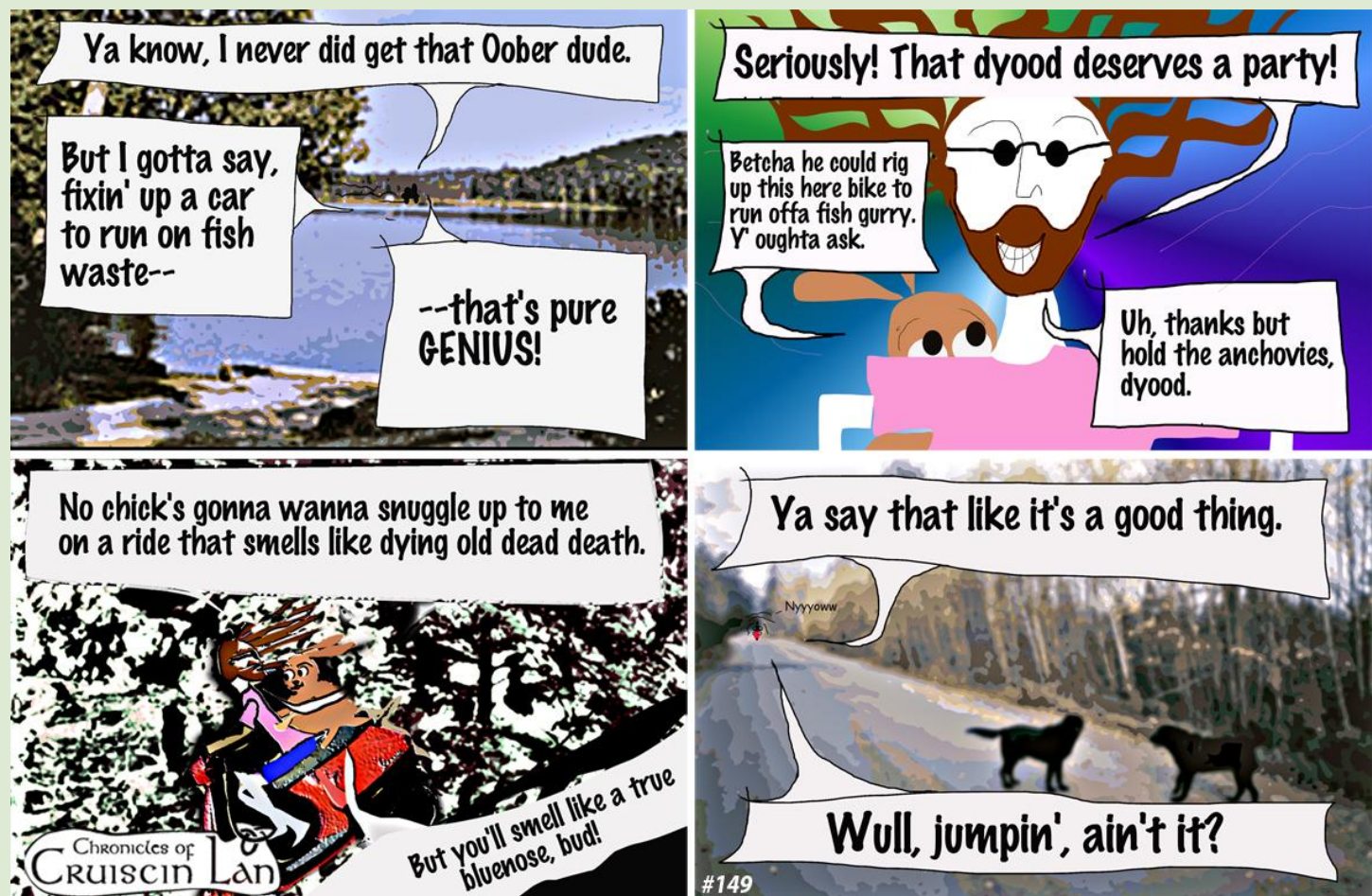
### What I Need

Conditions that are good for songwriting are solitude and a lot of time, almost to the point where you get a little bit bored. That's why residencies are really good. They force you to do that, in a way. But you can't always have that, so it's kind of an experiment too, just trying to figure out what are the situations that make for good songwriting. It really helps to be around other creative people. It also helps to listen to music that you love. You can be listening and saying to yourself, *I really like how that harpist structured that chord, and let me try that on the guitar . . .*

*To be continued next week . . .*

## CHRONICLES OF CRUISCIN LAN

Wanda Waterman St. Louis





## HEALTH MATTERS

Katie D'Souza



## Organic Foods

In the supermarket, it's becoming increasingly common to see a permanent section dedicated to "natural" or "organic" foods. What makes a food organic, and why are these foods gaining such popularity? Are they worth the extra cost over "conventionally grown" foods?

## What?

What exactly does it mean for a food to be grown organically? Organic vegetables are those grown without the use of synthetic chemical sprays as pesticides, herbicides, and fungicides; organic meat, fish, and animal products come from animals raised without growth hormones, antibiotics, or conventionally sprayed grains in their diets. Additionally, animals grown under organic guidelines require regular access to pastureland and the ability to move freely in each direction.

## Why?

Much of the controversy surrounding organically grown foods stems from the debate over the toxicity of conventional sprays. There's additional disagreement over whether there is a greater nutritional potential in organic foods.

The most commonly studied sprays are the organophosphates, actually a class of chemicals from which many conventional sprays are derived. It's relatively undisputed that organophosphates are potentially toxic when ingested in minute quantities, especially for infants, children, small pets, and the elderly. In addition, there is the issue of direct toxicity for those, like farmers, who handle organophosphate sprays. Examples of effects include teratogenicity (potential for birth defects) and nervous system diseases like Parkinson's.

With the conventional vs. organic debate, the biggest issue is whether there's a similar toxicity in produce grown using conventional sprays. It's difficult to assess, but a few items to ponder include the following.

Migratory birds have been found to carry levels of the types of pesticides that correlate with the pesticides used along their migration patterns. It's uncertain whether this phenomenon is from pesticide exposure in the air, or from herbicide residue in the vegetation that the birds consume. Of course, the question does arise: if chemical residues can occur in birds due to the air they breathe and the food they eat, then could the same occur for other animals, including humans?

The National Research Council maintains that conventional spray residue is evident in young children's bodies (typically stored in fat tissue), and that a period of organic food consumption reduced these chemical levels. However, studies of adult consumption of organic foods didn't show the same chemical-reduction response.

Regardless, it is a fact that chemical residues are usually stored in fatty tissue in our bodies. If chemical residue from conventional sprays were in our tissues, it's interesting to





contemplate whether “burning fat” would cause a chemical release into the bloodstream. (Exercise is still good for you—instead, consider the quality of the fat you wish to burn!)

The nutritional potential of organic foods is also a subject laden with controversy. Some US-based scientific studies claim negligible benefit; however, other studies, including several from Europe, maintain that organic foods possess higher values of desirable health-promoting complexes like antioxidants and fatty acids. Additionally, some people claim a taste difference between organically grown and conventionally grown foods; others note that organically grown vegetables decay far more slowly in the fridge than do conventionally-grown vegetables of the same type, age, and degree of ripeness. (However, personal experience isn’t considered significant evidence).

### How Do I Know It’s Legit?

This is a great question! Any food item which is truly organically grown will always bear a certification label from a recognized organic food certification agency. (The exception is those spray-free beets that your grandmother grows in her backyard.) In Canada, in order for certification to be granted, the food must conform to the guidelines designated by the Canada Organic Standards (COS). These guidelines involve other factors besides the use of sprays or antibiotics. For example, genetically modified foods are a no-no, even if they have been grown according to organic growing standards. Additionally, animal products from certain animal growth situations, like feed lots where animals are overcrowded, are not considered organic.

In Canada, look for the “Canada Organic” label (either red and green with black print, or black and white), redesigned last year, which are the official “it’s organic” stamp. Certification is given through several different agencies, depending on the location of the organic farm. Note that if an item doesn’t have this label, then it is likely not organic, even if the food is advertised to be so.

In the US, keep an eye out for the “USDA Organic” labels on foods, signifying that the food complies with the US organic food standards.

### The Final Word

Besides the potential for health benefits, it is also evident that organic foods have a healthy impact on our ecosystem. No pesticides in the soil in which our vegetables are grown means no pesticide run-off into our rivers and streams. As a result, there aren’t the same negative effects on vulnerable water-dwelling species, such as frogs.



And then when you consider that this water—with or without pesticides—is evaporated into the atmosphere and re-falls on us as rain, then seeping into our water supply . . . well, you get the idea. Apparently, organic foods have the potential to positively impact both our bodies and the earth. Pass the organic beets, please!

*Is it really organic? To be sure, look for the “Canada Organic” label; it’s either red and green with black print, or black and white.*



## From Where I Sit

Hazel Anaka

### Countdown to Reveal

I've watched my share of reality shows, particularly the home renovation or home redecoration kind. The faux drama of the countdown to "reveal"—the return of the homeowners, start of the open house, or winning of some competition—always feels contrived. It feels like manipulation and a stretch for the more cynical among us. Who are they trying to kid? We know the episode takes place over days, weeks, or even months, not neat little 30 or 60-minute parcels of TV time. We know there are stylists, photographers, producers, directors, interns, painters, carpenters, hosts, tradespeople, and assistants, plus the couples, families, or rivals taking part in the episode.

The conflict and cliffhanger moments build to hook us with the sheer suspense of it all. Will the supplier come through with the granite countertop? Will the group of neophytes finish painting the house? Will the reaction of potential buyers—to be caught on secret camera—be favourable? Has the project stayed on budget?

Well, kids, gather around to hear my story. I believe the drama. I've felt the pressure.

This past weekend, Roy and I helped our daughter and her business partner decorate for a large Christmas party at a conference facility. Nearly a year ago, the committee requested a Mardi Gras theme. My first reaction was *That's just crazy*, but hey, I'm just the hired help, so what do I know? As I researched the theme, though, I got hooked on the idea. As always, there were several, sometimes opposing, factors: meet the client's expectations within budget, make sure the guests have a great time, ensure the overall concept is creative and unique, deliver what you've promised. On time.

When decorating a cavernous room—think 25-foot ceilings and several thousand square feet of area—scale and lighting are critical. A King and Queen of the Mardi Gras area that featured two "thrones" and costume props would be a huge hit. Back by popular demand, open picture frames suspended from the ceiling would create another photo op area.

The client requested a street scene backdrop. So Friday morning, Cecilia and I began painting a 12-foot-high by 18-foot-wide fabric panel that I had sewn together at home weeks ago. We painted and painted—brick facade, double doors, shuttered windows, balcony railings, hanging flowerpots. By Saturday noon, it was ready to hang. But wait, there's more. We all pitched in to lay out 700 place settings, including a feather mask on a stick and three strands of beads at each one. We created 88 centrepieces on site and scattered 1600 coins. In total, we untangled and handled 3500 strands of beads. On the stage and elsewhere, we created magic with yards of fabric panels, cello, tulle, an eight-foot mask, and dozens of hanging fleur-de-



lys. Glitter and shine in gold, green, and purple.

When things looked especially bad—about three hours before the “reveal”—we called in reinforcements. Greg and Carrie helped save the day. Fifteen-month-old Grady did his part by being an angel and letting his parents work. A custodian was still mopping up our mess at the back of the ballroom as guests were arriving at the front. The pressure to produce was intense. The adrenaline rush was fierce. But the relief was immense, and the pride at a job well done was huge.

Post-event feedback was gratifying. Our decorating, the jesters and mimes we hired, and a Dixie band helped create the ambience and excitement this event demanded. But I could have done without the cliffhanger, from where I sit.

### **CLICK OF THE WRIST: Stressed Out**

**Stress during the holidays: it's become such a stereotypical theme that the joke almost writes itself. But it truly doesn't have to be that way. This week's links focus on ways to keep balanced this season. Here's to a healthier, happier, holiday!**

#### **Look Around You**

According to the art of Feng Shui, our surroundings can affect the way we think, feel, and react. This article gives some suggestions for improving your mood by using principles of the ancient art.

#### **Family Ties**

Family: according to those Hallmark Christmas specials, it's one of the best parts of the holidays. For some, though, those tense family gatherings can be dreaded experiences. Whether it's awkward separations, old squabbles, new family members, or substance abusers in the family, certain tricky situations certainly can dampen the holiday spirit. In this downloadable audio interview, counsellor and family therapist Judy Osborne gives tips for dealing with family tensions (a condensed print version is also available).

#### **Inner Self**

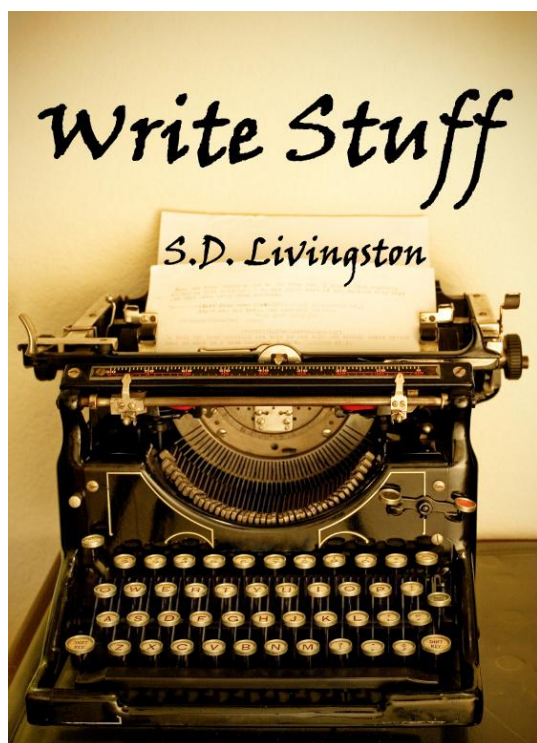
Weight gain and crankiness aren't the only results of too much pre-holiday partying and stress; excesses can negatively affect your hormones, too (leading to further stress and weight gain). This *Chatelaine* article offers tips to help readers keep all that internal biology in balance.

#### **Giving Tree**

We all know it's the season for giving, and that it's only through generosity that we attain that elusive Christmas spirit. This blogger takes it a step further—she suggests that generosity can't, and shouldn't, be limited to donating or gifting money or things. Sometimes, she says, a smile or attention is the best thing we can give.







## The Deep

You know that niggling feeling you get when you're sure that you've misplaced something but can't think what it might be? Or that there's something really important you're supposed to remember and it's just outside your mental grasp, flitting like an elusive moth among the sparking synapses of your brain? Well, I've had that feeling for a couple of years now, and I've finally figured out what's wrong.

My attention span is crumbling. And I want it back.

I first noticed this mental fidgetiness when I pulled away from the computer screen one night and tried to read a book. As usual, I'd spent the day editing and fact-checking. I'd clicked, surfed, and ingested thousands of snippets. My eyes had jumped from articles to video ads to links to emails and back again—then rinsed and repeated until the droplets of data merged into one constant stream.

It was all in a day's work and it was work that I loved, but after eight hours at the desk, it was time to go analogue. I curled up on the couch, opened a book—and that's when I realized something was definitely rotten in Denmark. Or rather, the part of my brain I like to call Denmark; the bits that let me focus on long passages of text and get lost in stories about kings and the play being the thing.

Halfway through a page, my focus started skidding sideways. Two pages in, my attention was still skittering madly and I had no clue what I'd just finished reading. I started again, and that's when I noticed an even more alarming development. My eyes were actually darting to the edges of the book, just off the page. And I realized what they were instinctively seeking: the film trailers and food ads that had played at the periphery of my online attention all day.

Maybe I was just having an off day, but a bit more surfing (ironically) revealed a potential cause. As this *Boston Globe* [review](#) of Nicholas Carr's *The Shallows* notes, "The Internet works on our brains in such a way that we are in danger of losing our capacity for deep, sustained reading and thought — along with all the cognitive benefits."

I'd suspected it, of course, after reading Sven Birkert's *The Gutenberg Elegies* several years before. But the change was insidious, creeping up on me slowly, and Birkert's (and Neil Postman's) ideas had stayed firmly in the realm of the academic until the night I realized I couldn't even focus long enough to read a single page of my favourite author.

Other pieces of the puzzle started falling into place. It had been weeks since I'd tried to focus on a novel—once a beloved pastime I could indulge in for hours. I'd found myself distracted even during a one-hour TV show. Half-hour shows worked better, and even then I'd start scrolling through the listings during the program. And homework? I was struggling to focus long enough to write an 800-word essay, where just a couple of years ago it had been a comparative breeze to do a 2,000-word paper and get an A.

Something was happening, something purely anecdotal, but I didn't like it one bit.

Other research backs up the notion that our brains can be rewired even into old age, and that the very nature of Internet content is what Carr calls “repetitive, intensive, interactive, addictive.” In a recent *New York Times* [article](#), Michael Rich, an associate professor at Harvard Medical School and the executive director of the Center on Media and Child Health in Boston, says the consequences are especially worrisome for kids.

“Their brains are rewarded not for staying on task but for jumping to the next thing,” he notes. “The worry is we’re raising a generation of kids in front of screens whose brains are going to be wired differently.”



Thing is, I didn’t want to lose my attention span. Hell, I *couldn’t* lose it. It had helped me get most of the way through an English degree. It had allowed me to focus on important contracts and wade through income tax returns. It had been the benevolent taskmaster that kept me plodding away long enough to write (and research) books.

***“The Internet works on our brains in such a way that we are in danger of losing our capacity for deep, sustained reading and thought . . .”***

***Wen Stephenson***

The quandary, not surprisingly, was that I love the Internet. Not because there are videos of kittens doing funny things and people smashing their cars into bollards. Well, okay. Maybe I do like it for those things. But only a little bit.

Mostly, I love it because it allows me to research my novels in a way I couldn’t possibly do at the library. And because I can access thousands of academic articles for my essays, virtually in an instant. And because it lets me keep in touch with friends and family. All wonderful things.

But it was also taking small bites of my brain every day, its nibbling away at my ability to focus happening slowly, just like a caterpillar patiently, inexorably devouring a leaf thousands of times its size.

So I started to read. More accurately, I started to read again. Big, long chunks of prose. The type of thing I used to love but found increasingly hard to focus on. For an hour before bed, or during my lunch, or any random time during the day, I turned everything off. No radio, no iPod, no computer. And I read. E-books or paper books, the only rule was that it had to be a sustained narrative flow—and there couldn’t be any pop-up windows or email notices to distract me.

It’s taken a surprising amount of mental effort to break the constant Internet habit, but it seems to be working. Although the results aren’t scientific, after three weeks my brain is settling down. To borrow a phrase from Tracy Seeley’s [blog](#), my chattering monkey mind is slowly remembering how to sit quietly for a while. I can feel it regaining the ability to look at things deeply, not just go darting along the shallow trail of links on the screen.

The effects are visible in myriad ways. It was surprisingly easy to focus during a three-hour exam last week. Sitting through a movie is enjoyable again, not something to be interrupted by occasional dashes to check for new email. My mind seems to be spontaneously making connections again, with flashes of inspiration lighting up when I least expect it.

In fact, I’ve made so much progress that—hey, there’s something new on my Twitter feed . . .

## INTERNATIONAL NEWS DESK



### At Home: Dr. Personality

Is your doctor brusque, rude, or demeaning? Does she blur ethical lines? Does he have the bedside manner of TV's Dr. House? Good news: in the future, the stereotypical image of the personality-challenged doctor might be getting a makeover, starting with the application process to med school.

As *The Globe and Mail* [reports](#), McMaster University's medical school is pioneering an "innovative online test" for its applicants, in the hopes of accepting "more students with the character to match their cognitive powers."

The online test parallels a similar approach used in many med schools during the application interview process: presenting prospective students with time-limited ethical and decision-making scenarios. However, while those situational interviews are only given to applicants who make it to the interview stage, the online test is designed to "bring identification of those strengths into evaluation of

the total number of applicants each year."

The rationale: while the typical application process focuses on good grades and test scores, it may "accept people who are not necessarily going to be the best doctors," since it can overlook negative personal characteristics related to "decision-making, ethics, communication skills and cultural sensitivity."

And it makes sense. As Dr. Harold Reiter, chair of admissions for medicine at McMaster, told reporters, "92 per cent of . . . complaints [about doctors] were because of personal characteristics - professional qualities, if you will."

### Around the World: Imaginary Food

Craving ice cream, a Big Mac, or some similarly diet-busting treat? Contrary to popular thought, the way to deal might not be to attempt to banish the cravings wholesale. Rather, instead of thinking before you eat, you might try thinking *instead* of eating.

Sound counterintuitive? Not according to new psychological research from Carnegie Mellon University in Pittsburgh. As the *National Geographic's* Daily News site [reports](#), "imaginary chewing and swallowing can reduce cravings . . . [and] imagining eating a specific food reduces your interest in that food, so you eat less of it."

When we give in to temptation and start nibbling that chocolate bar, our cravings—and the satisfaction we derive from the treat—both drop off dramatically with each bite. This so-called "habituation" also can occur "solely via the power of the mind," according to the study.

Study leaders are hoping that the results might "lead to new behavioral techniques for people looking to control overeating or other addictive behaviors such as smoking."



## 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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