

THE VOICE

MAGAZINE

Vol 19 Iss 06 2011-02-11

Love and Oysters

The food-romance connection

Language of Desire

Poetry that shook a nation

Shop 'Til You Stop

Time to commit

*Plus: In Conversation With
From Where I Sit
Write Stuff
and much more!*



CONTENTS

WELCOME TO THE VOICE PDF

The Voice's interactive Table of Contents allows you to click a story title to jump to an article. Clicking the bottom right corner of any page returns you here. Some ads and graphics are also links.

Features

Editorial: Possessive3

Articles

In Conversation With . . . Stacey Kent.....4

Health Matters: Aphrodisiac Foods6

Maghreb Voices: Power, Poetry, and Dissent in Algeria, Part I8

Columns

Chronicles of Cruiscin Lan7

From Where I Sit: Hair Today, Gone Tomorrow..... 10

Write Stuff: Google Lit Trips 11

AUSU Update 14

News and Events

Did You Know?5

Click of the Wrist 12

International News Desk 13

From our Readers

Letters to the Editor2

**The Voice
Magazine**

www.voicemagazine.org

1213, 10011 109th
Street NW
Edmonton AB
T5J 3S8

800.788.9041 ext. 2905

Email
voice@voicemagazine.org

Publisher
AU Students' Union

Editor-In-Chief
Tamra Ross

Managing Editor
Christina M. Frey

Regular Contributors
Hazel Anaka
Katie D'Souza
S.D. Livingston
Wanda Waterman St.
Louis

The Voice is published
every Friday in HTML
and PDF format.

For weekly email
reminders as each issue
is posted, fill out the
subscription form [here](#).

The Voice does not
share its subscriber list
with anyone.

Special thanks to
Athabasca University's
The Insider for its
frequent contributions.

© 2011 by *The Voice*

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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



EDITORIAL

Christina M. Frey

Possessive



With February 14th just around the corner, the card companies, chocolate manufacturers, and florists are out in full force. With all that comes the inevitable barrage of Valentine's-related media, ranging from romantic classics marathons on the old movies channel to pop psychology articles encouraging us to use the holiday as a springboard to improve relationships in all aspects of our lives. And of course there are the countless op-ed rants about the commercialism that's destroyed the meaning of the holiday—and about our materialism in general.

Because we love our possessions too much. And that's the problem, right? Isn't it that love of our stuff that gets in the way of our relationships with people—and with ourselves?

Maybe not. According to some thoughts posted on TreeHugger.com, we've got it all backwards: our materialism problem comes from the fact that we don't love our stuff *enough*. Because we don't love or appreciate what we have, we get bored with it quickly and waste time, effort, and emotional (not to mention financial) resources on the constant business of trading it in for more and better.

The blogger likens this relationship with our stuff to the “consumer equivalent . . . of a one night stand,” calling it more like “lust” than anything else. I love that imagery. And it rings true: when it comes to possessions we're pretty fickle, tending to discard them quickly in order to chase after the next cool thing.

On the other hand, improving our relationship with the things we have does open a lot of doors. For example, we're no longer slaves to what I call the “2.0 phenomenon”—our endless pursuit of the bigger model, the new gotta-have-it toy. Breaking the bonds of that type of consumerism brings a certain level of contentment. “Need” and “want” meld into one, and we're more peaceful because we no longer *have* to get anything. We're good with what we've got.

Ironically, as the TreeHugger blogger pointed out, this attitude means our stuff will actually end up being better. After all, if we've got commitment in mind, we'll want to make sure that what we buy will be a good fit for us for the long haul. This means that we'll gravitate toward the better made, the more practical, and the more suited to us.

As a result, we'll also be better off financially. Committing to our purchases, rather than buying them because we want them right now (although maybe not tomorrow or next week)—will do much to reduce the problem of consumer debt. Without the constant “need” to replace what we've got with something better, overspending's much less of an issue.

There are society-wide benefits, too: we'll end up living a more sustainable lifestyle, and not merely because we'll throw fewer things in the trash. In fact, we'll reduce manufacturing drains on resources all the way down the chain.

And most importantly, loving our “stuff”—or renewing our commitment to what we have and what we buy—can bring peace not only within ourselves but within our families and among our friends. Jealousy, greed, and many money-related squabbles are replaced with contentment, peace, and financial freedom. How's that for a sweet Valentine's Day gift?

IN CONVERSATION WITH . . .

Wanda Waterman St. Louis

Stacey Kent, Part I

Stacey Kent is an American jazz chanteuse with a large and zealous worldwide cult following. Her meticulous, understated phrasings and deeply sensitive renderings of standards and original tunes have won her many accolades and enthusiastic reviews. She sings in both English and French.

Stacey began her musical career after completing a Masters degree in comparative literature. Now, after six bestselling albums last year (with many

songs co-written by friend and acclaimed novelist Kazuo Ishiguro) she just released Raconte-moi and will soon release an album based on Brazilian music. Recently she took the time to talk with Wanda Waterman St. Louis about her early—and ongoing—search for musical treasures.

The Quest

I don't come from a "musical family," but music was a very important part of my upbringing. My most powerful memories are of being a little kid, getting off the bus after school, running up to my room, closing my door, and putting on my music. That was everything to me.

I had older siblings, so I was also listening to what they were listening to. I made discoveries through my friends and my friends' siblings. Everything I could find I would listen to, and this led me from one record to another. Even in places where you wouldn't expect to find music, I would be listening. Even when I was out shopping with my mother, I would be in a shop and the music would be on and I would tune in to it. I suppose other people were just passing by without noticing the music was there.

My parents were very into classical music, so I discovered classical composers through them—Ravel and Debussy and Maria Callas and Prokofiev—and I loved it and it moved me. Even when I was little I knew that there were certain chord progressions that touched me, that made me cry. But I didn't take it any further than that.

My brothers and sisters were quite a bit older than I was, so there was kind of a hippie movement in the house; I listened to Crosby, Stills, and Nash, and Neil Young. Then it was Aretha Franklin and Louis Armstrong and Ella Fitzgerald. There were lots of movies going on in the house too, so I was listening to Julie Andrews and Barbra Streisand.

One of my sister's friends was listening to Django Reinhardt and I remember going to her house and hearing Django playing in her bedroom. I stopped at the door and said, "What's *that*?" She said, "That's Django," and she made me a cassette tape to take home. I looked at the titles and the list of personnel, because she had written it all out for me, and I discovered other names through that. I discovered Benny Carter and went to the record store looking for him.

I don't think it was a quest to find anything specific— it was just a quest to make discoveries.

I bought a record called *Ella & Duke at the Cote d'Azur*, and I loved the cover—it was black and white and grainy—and the music was live and very real. I took this record home and listened to it a gazillion times, without knowing what jazz was. I didn't know what the categories were, and I didn't care at that point. It was all just very eclectic and pretty wonderful.

My parents knew that I was musical and they encouraged it, but there were no musicians in our family. It was never discussed that I would or wanted to be a musician, but whenever there was a gathering I was the one who was asked to sing and perform for it.

I went to college and got a degree in comparative literature, which was something that was very important to me, and I think it helped fuel what I do today. But it was always a hobby, it was always on the sidelines, and it wasn't until after college that I realized that I could actually pursue this thing.

(To be continued next week.)



DID YOU KNOW?



MERLOT

Do studying and Merlot mix? They do if we're talking about the web-based MERLOT, also known as Multimedia Educational Resource for Online Learning and Teaching, a "continually growing Open Educational Resource (OER) of online teaching tools and support resources." The free resource, a project of California State University, is a goldmine for those who want to supplement their online learning or teaching experience.

Learning materials are often linked to outside websites, and include everything from simple articles to involved presentations with audio and video components.

Students will enjoy browsing the resources in their study areas or in areas of personal interest. Best of all, they can guide themselves toward the more effective teaching tools by reading the comments and reviews made both by other users and by the Peer Reviewer Board in that discipline.

On the verge of graduating? MERLOT also provides opportunities for networking with colleagues across various disciplines as well as the chance to participate in the larger learning community as a peer reviewer or virtual speaker. It also co-sponsors a conference on online learning.

MERLOT can be a bit overwhelming due to the vast array of resources it contains. For a more detailed guide, view the tutorials on its [YouTube channel](#). Or, to get started, visit the [main page](#).

HEALTH MATTERS

Katie D'Souza



Aphrodisiac Foods

In early February those intriguing articles start appearing, claiming aphrodisiac properties for certain foods. Yet we eat many of these foods on a regular basis, without any—well, *noticeable* effects. Is there any fact behind these claims, or is the truth interwoven with fiction?

Almonds

Almonds are considered to be an ancient symbol of fertility. In fact, almonds were sprinkled on newly married couples to call down the blessing of fertility upon them. Although the symbolism is picturesque, the almond-aphrodisiac connotation stops there. The scientific literature simply doesn't suggest any connection between sexual stimulation and almonds. Note, however, that almonds are high in many nutrients, including zinc and magnesium—minerals that are important for reproductive health (and bodily health in general!) in both men and women.

Chocolate

Another food item commonly touted as an aphrodisiac is chocolate. These claims range from increased “feel good” neurotransmitter levels in the brain to actual sensual stimulation through chocolate's taste. Unfortunately for this “food of the gods,” scientific evidence for chocolate as an aphrodisiac is in fact lacking. Although chocolate does cause the brain to release opioids, which produce a feeling of well-being and euphoria, there is no direct aphrodisiac effect. Rather, the opioids actually are responsible for chocolate “addiction.” (How many of us can resist a chocolate chunk sitting right in front of us?)

Oysters

Historically, oysters may be one of the first foods to have landed on the aphrodisiac list; there's a written Roman record dating from AD 2 linking oyster consumption and the “wanton behaviour of ladies” afterward. However, evidence shows that people nowadays can consume oysters without any worries of aphrodisiac after-effects.

In fact, oysters don't directly stimulate sexual functions at all, although indirectly, their nutrient load is beneficial for the overall reproductive health of both sexes. Oysters are an exceptionally high source of zinc; in fact, a three-ounce serving contains approximately 154 mg of zinc (compare this to the same size serving of beef, which yields approximately 9 mg of zinc).

*Wine*

Wine has traditionally been considered an aphrodisiac—or at least an important part of a romantic atmosphere. After all, isn't a glass of red wine a staple in photos of candlelit dinners? However, it's extremely difficult to determine whether wine has aphrodisiac properties. Rather, it might be a case of

which came first, the chicken or the egg: is wine an aphrodisiac on its own, or does the relaxed, uninhibited feeling that follows the consumption of a glass of wine indirectly contribute?

Bottom Line

Clearly, many of the claims for so-called aphrodisiac foods are grounded in folklore, not reality. However, regardless of whether these foods can be used with success in a romantic setting, let's not ignore their valuable nutrients! This Valentine's Day, give some love to your body and set the table with a nutritious spread to ensure life-long health.

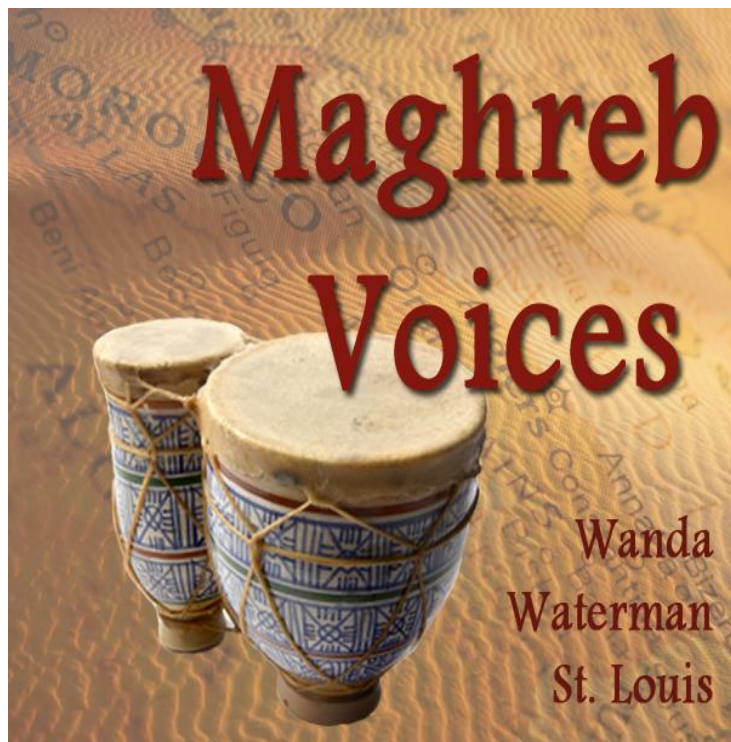
Katie D'Souza is an AU graduate and a licensed naturopathic doctor. She currently lives in Ontario.

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.

CHRONICLES OF CRUISCIN LAN

Wanda Waterman St. Louis





Power, Poetry, and Popular Dissent in Algeria, Part I

"Freedom is poetry, taking liberties with words, breaking the rules of normal speech, violating common sense. Freedom is violence."

Norman O. Brown

In 1980, Algerian scholar Mouloud Mammeri was preparing to present his book at a conference on Berber poetry in Tizi Ouzou. The book was a collection of poems he'd gathered, titled *Poèmes kabyles anciens*.

This bit of Algerian history may seem minor, maybe even pedantic. However, *Poèmes kabyles anciens* had been preceded by years of intense Arabization of Algeria, including prohibition of the Berber language in an apparent attempt to assimilate an ethnic group that had for millennia

demonstrated an unconquerable spirit.

In fact, Berber culture had dominated the region since Neolithic times, and for nearly as long had been resisting relentless tides of foreign invasion, occupation, and colonization. Berbers had intermarried with the Arabs and Europeans that had entered their territories, and had also embraced Islam, but had never indicated a willingness to abandon their language, customs, or cultural identity.

Not surprisingly, therefore, the government put the kibosh on the poetry conference. Massive rioting—an event now known as the Berber Spring—commenced, an insurrection of such magnitude that it took the brutal dictatorship years to crush it.

Other insurrections have reportedly been inspired and fuelled by poetry, but I can think of no others fought in its defence. Which brings the question: What kind of people are these, anyway?

Their history is one of painful—but unrelenting—struggle against oppression. Their problems boggle the mind. During the Algerian War of Independence, the Berbers had joined with the Arabs in ousting the French occupation. However, in the aftermath of the war the Berbers found their culture and language threatened by measures intended to homogenize the country into one culture, language, and religious view.

It gets worse. The current discontent in Algeria parallels what we've recently witnessed taking place in Tunisia



and Egypt, but it is unique in that the dictator Bouteflika (hand-picked by the army in 1999) is not really in charge. And so the fundamental weakness of revolution per se— the difficulty of uprooting all traces of the corruption of a former regime— is especially salient when the regime is ruled by an army as opposed to an autocrat. At least the ousting of Ben Ali from Tunisia could be seen as a symbolic victory, as will the departure of Mubarak from his ruling position in Egypt if this should ever take place.

“The human urge to resist domination is primal . . . [t]he language of resistance and the language of poetry share the same primitive essence.”

Algerians may not even be able to hope for a symbolic victory. For one thing, they’re keenly aware that their success in ridding themselves of French rule when the War of Independence ended in 1962 was followed by a regime at least as corrupt as the one it had jettisoned.

You’d think such a historical record and life under such oppressive tyranny would produce a catatonic numbness. Not so—unlike the Tunisians, who until the recent Jasmine Revolution were deceptively docile, the Algerians have always protested. Just last year over a hundred thousand riots, demonstrations, and other clashes resulting in police intervention were reported.

When asked what they want for their country, young Algerians will nearly always answer that among other things they want democracy, some insisting that without democracy violence is inevitable. The 40 political parties all use the word “democracy” or some form of it in their names, indicating an awareness of the depth of this national longing and in some cases a desire to exploit it.

Although political parties have made many attempts to hijack Algerian unrest and steer it to their own advantage, social networks are ensuring that the uprisings are seen as popular, not political. Demonstrators are discouraged from self-identifying with any party or ideology, and political leaders are asked to take a back seat during demonstrations.

Leaderless rebellions may at first glance seem like a purely modern phenomenon, a by-product of the Internet age, but such rebellions have been recorded back as far as the ancient world. Long before the web and social networks, popular rebellions have inspired poets—and poetry has always served to fuel rebellions.

Throughout history, the human urge to resist domination is primal and universal and bound up with the urge to recite magical incantations that negotiate, initiate, and transform experience. The language of resistance and the language of poetry share the same primitive essence. Thus it’s not surprising that in a country that has for so long been wracked with struggle, the suppression of a book of poetry should serve a catalyst for insurrection.

(To be continued next week.)





*From
Where
I Sit*

Hazel Anaka

Hair Today, Gone Tomorrow

A good hair day is much like the coming of a comet: it doesn't happen that often, but when it does, it's a joy to behold. It also means that it's a day when you won't see that passive-aggressive girlfriend who spins like a weather vane, your ex-boyfriend, or anyone who can advance your career or father your children. Those meetings always happen when you haven't shampooed for three days, your roots are waaaaay overdue for a touch-up, and there's no safe place to duck out of sight. On a good hair day, count on your precious coif being seen by a panhandler, a blind man, and a newborn.

But don't despair. If you look really, really hard, there may be a women's magazine to come to your aid. Or perhaps a tabloid movie star rag that pronounces whom you should be imitating this week. If it's not a wear-a-bag-over-your-head day, you could venture down the health and beauty aisle at the drugstore. The answer to your prayers must be somewhere along the 50 lineal feet of products. Maybe your stylist can see you on an emergency basis for an expert opinion, some gentle hand-holding, and a \$200 fix.

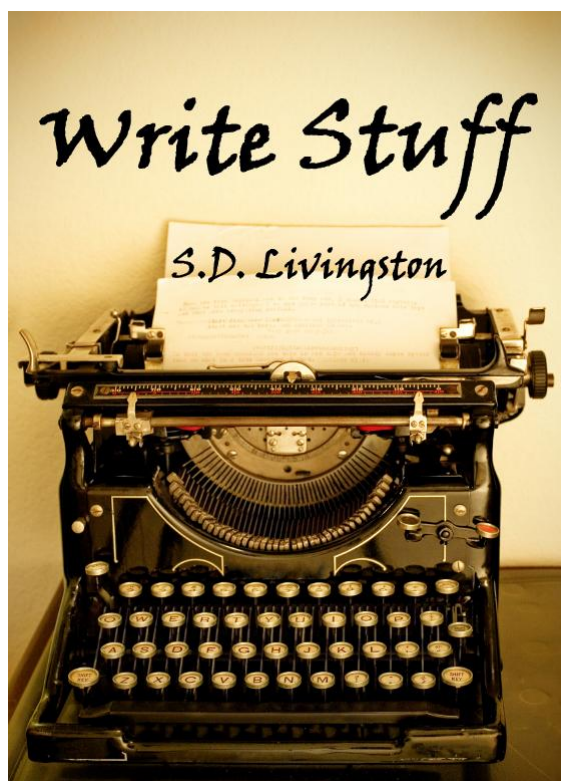
It's craziness that most of us have bought hook, line, and sinker. And that obvious handful of women who haven't just end up going over to the dark side when they appear on a reality makeover show. So we perm or straighten, cut off or grow out, colour or go *au naturel*—all in the name of image, beauty, or fitting in.

It goes without saying that we always want what Mother Nature has denied us. Can't you still smell the fumes emanating from the Toni home perms of the 1950s, 1960s and beyond? Today, that odoriferous memory has been replaced with the singed smell of hair being straightened. Even Dr. Oz warned against overdoing the use of the flatiron because it cooks the protein in the hair. I don't see a whack of straighteners on Kijiji, so I guess that bit of science will be ignored too in the name of beauty.

We ignore our age, hair texture, face shape, and styling prowess at our peril as we march boldly into the salon, clutching a photo in our moist palm and asking, "Can we do this?"

That's what happened in November 2009, when I had my last real haircut. I decided to grow it out to save the hairdresser's fee, to get a different look, to shake things up a bit. Of course, I haven't saved any money because it still needs to be shaped and trimmed. But it is different than the lifetime of short hair I've always had, and some days I'm not sure I did the right thing.

With resistant grey, a funny hairline, medium-weight hair, glasses, and one or possibly two wrinkles, it is a challenge to find the right look for this face, body, and lifestyle. Heaven help us all the day I decide to let the grey take over, from where I sit.



Google Lit Trips

Even before humans began preserving stories in print, epic tales transported us to faraway lands. Not physically, of course. But from *The Epic of Gilgamesh* to *One Thousand and One Nights*, we've imagined the sights and sounds of our favourite stories, conjuring those worlds in our minds. Now, there's a website that takes readers even closer to those literary worlds. It's called [Google Lit Trips](#) and it's one more way technology is making literature popular again.

The premise is simple: create a digital journey that lets readers follow the same path as literary characters.

If you've read the award-winning *Hana's Suitcase*, you can use Google Lit Trips to trace Hana's journey to the concentration camps and locate the barracks she and George lived in. Small photo icons reveal images of various places on the map, and a slider shows historical changes to borders and place names.

There are categories to turn layers on or off, including things like roads and weather. As a teaching tool, one of the most

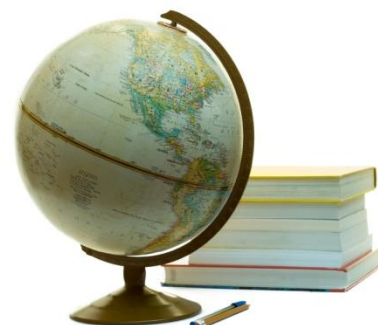
interesting categories is Global Awareness. Users can choose to explore icons with info from WWF Conservation Projects, Jane Goodall, WaterAid, and many others.

Readers can follow the experiences of their favourite literary characters in almost unlimited directions. One of the richest Lit Trips is for *The Grapes of Wrath*. It leads to historical websites on farm workers and the Depression, many featuring video and sound resources—even things like the lyrics to Bruce Springsteen's song "The Ghost of Tom Joad."

I must confess that I had a certain reluctance when I first heard about Google Lit Trips. After all, much of the joy in reading comes from letting our imaginations bring the tales to life. My mental picture of Elizabeth Bennett or Mr. Darcy is probably far different from yours (at least, it was before Keira Knightley and Matthew Macfadyen hit the big screen in those roles).

But then I realized that Google Lit Trips is simply a digital version of the enormous atlas in the school library. Long, long ago, in the days before the web, students reading *White Fang* might have flipped the atlas pages to locate the Yukon, or found photos of the Klondike Gold Rush in an encyclopedia. Lit Trips is that same experience—multiplied endlessly. In fact, the danger is that it's so easy to get caught up in the fascinating links that readers forget to finish the book.

The best part though? As this [National Post](#) article explains, "with some basic knowledge of HTML, teachers can add their own images, audio files or text boxes—for example, there might be discussion starters at each landmark to encourage higher-level thinking."



From kid lit like Robert McCloskey's *Make Way for Ducklings* to classic fare such as James Joyce's *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, the Lit Trips site has plenty to get you started. And along with an easy-to-follow primer, this [video](#) offers info on how to create your own literary accompaniments.

And now you'll have to excuse me. I'm off to stare at the snowbanks and wait for the Lit Trip for *Frommer's Hawaii*.

CLICK OF THE WRIST: Bee Mine

Tired of chocolate, flowers, and the same old displays of affection that the commercial world's been selling us for years? Maybe we could take a few cues for originality from nature—or perhaps not. This week, in honour of Valentine's Day, we look at a few of the more unique (and downright bizarre) mating rituals from the animal kingdom.

Rooting for the Little Guy

Typically, cuttlefish courtship rituals involve a lot of fighting over which male will dominate and win the chance to mate with the female(s). But what happens to the smaller males—the ones who don't stand a chance? They use brain over brawn, cleverly disguising themselves as another female and hiding among them in order to mate. The Discovery Channel has the story.

In Your Eyes

Humans might tone up at the gym in order to impress a possible love interest. Stalk-eyed bugs also change their bodies—literally. When the males emerge from the pupal stage, their eyes are quite close to their heads, but when the time comes to mate, the bugs will undergo a transformation during which the eye supports will lengthen, creating their distinct look. They'll then approach the female, who will compare the eye stalk lengths of her male admirers, selecting the one with the longest eye stalks as a mate. The Discovery Channel's *Life* series has a video of the amazing transformation.

Flashy

It's female fireflies that use signal flashes to attempt to attract the males—but their motives aren't always on the up-and-up. That's because the females of certain species of fireflies deliberately mimic the mating signals of other species in order to lure unsuspecting males—who become the female's next meal. Heartless? Perhaps not; the blood of certain fireflies contains a toxin that other fireflies need in order to repel predators.

No Boys Allowed

No male? No problem! One species of lizard is female-only. Scientists aren't sure of the exact reproductive mechanism, but it's believed that their asexual reproduction results in offspring that are direct genetic clones of the mother. This article and video from PBS explain some of the questions raised by this form of reproduction.



INTERNATIONAL NEWS DESK



At Home: The Fast and the Furious

Speeding, even on a minor scale, is a pretty frequent sight across Canada's streets and highways. Five, ten, or even twenty kilometres over the limit seems standard fare these days. Less common, fortunately, are those who decide to make history by clocking 170 km/h—*over the speed limit*.

As the CBC [reports](#), Quebec provincial police recently ticketed a Montreal driver who was reaching speeds of 240 km/h in a 70 km/h zone. It's considered to be "one of the worst cases of speeding in Canadian history."

The driver, who was apparently driving a borrowed BMW SUV, was sober and cooperated with police when he was stopped. Fortunately, his reckless driving didn't cause any damage—other than to his wallet, that is. The speeder received a \$2,598 ticket and lost his license for six months.

Although a previous Quebec driver had been clocked at 242 km/h, that situation had involved a speed zone of 100 km/h. Here, the excess speed earned the driver a place in history, as well as "a record 42 demerit points."

Typically, the maximum number of demerit points given at one time is 15, but "new provincial laws allow more points to be taken away from particularly egregious offenders." In fact, the laws state that 30 demerit points may be given if the speed limit is exceeded by 121 km/h. At a record-breaking 170 km/h over the speed limit, the 2011 driver probably deserved the notoriety.

Around the World: Half Empty

Some people, it seems, find the dark side in everything. Are they naturally pessimistic, or really just cranky and in need of a new outlook on life? According to recent research, it may actually be the former—and the tendency might be ingrained in their genetic code.

As *The Daily Telegraph* [reports](#), a study from the University of Michigan theorizes that "the amount of a chemical in the brain affects how we view the world."

This chemical, neuropeptide Y (NPY), is present in the brain in what's believed to be genetically determined, but varying, amounts. Those with lower levels of NPY "are much more negative and find it more difficult to deal with stressful situations . . . [and] are also more susceptible to depression."

Psychiatrists are hopeful that these discoveries will lead to breakthroughs in psychiatric research, particularly "early diagnosis of and prevention of psychiatric illness." As Dr. Brian Mickey, study co-author and a psychiatrist himself, told reporters, he hopes that the research will "guide [them] toward assessing an individual's risk for developing depression and anxiety."

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

1213, 10011 109th Street NW, Edmonton, AB T5J 3S8 - Ph: 800.788.9041 ext. 2905 - Fax: 780.497.7003 attn: Voice Editor

Publisher Athabasca University Students' Union
Editor-In-Chief Tamra Ross
Managing Editor Christina M. Frey

Regular Columnists Hazel Anaka, Katie D'Souza, S.D. Livingston, Wanda Waterman
St. Louis

www.voicemagazine.org

The Voice is published every Friday in HTML and PDF format.

Contact *The Voice* at voice@voicemagazine.org.

To receive a weekly email announcing each issue, subscribe [here](#). *The Voice* does not share its subscriber list.
Special thanks to Athabasca University's *The Insider* for its contributions.