

# THE VOICE

## MAGAZINE

Vol 19 Iss 10 2011-03-11

### **Running out of Time**

Hope amidst the ruins

### **Behind the Curtain**

Fiction vs. reality

### **Dance for Joy**

Sintonia Da Mata



*Plus:*

*Voix du Maghreb, Cruiscin Lan,  
From Where I Sit, and much more!*

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**The Voice  
Magazine**

[www.voicemagazine.org](http://www.voicemagazine.org)

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

800.788.9041 ext. 2905

Email  
[voice@voicemagazine.org](mailto: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

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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.





## IN REVIEW

Karl Low



## Looking Toward Dystopia

More than half of all North Americans believe that one day the Second Coming will occur, signalling the end of the world. About 20 per cent of American Christians believe it will happen in their lifetime.

And then there are those of us who don't expect we'll get the warning.

From super-volcanoes to asteroid extinction, peak oil to bioterrorism, global warming to genetically modified organisms, the number of vulnerabilities

our civilization has is truly frightening. And the remains of Easter Island, Sumer, and Ancient Rome all stand as mute testaments to the notion that civilizations, even advanced ones, can fall.

There's a growing market for examinations into the fall of civilizations. Rare is the night when you can watch the Discovery Channel, for example, without seeing some show depicting what life might be like without civilization as we know it. And currently, one of the more popular films on YouTube is *Zeitgeist*, a conspiracy theory-laden look at what might be herding our own civilization into destruction. With this in mind, when I heard of the movie *Dystopia: What is to be done?*, I was intrigued.

Available freely over the [web](#), *Dystopia: What is to be done?* is an hour-long look into some of the more pressing issues currently facing society. It is a project of Dr. Garry Potter, Director of Graduate Studies for Wilfrid Laurier University's Department of Sociology, and is also a tie-in to his [book](#) of the same name. An accompanying website outlines his research into our modern civilization's problems; that section alone was worth it to me.

Dr. Potter is frank in pointing out that the film's conception was partly in reaction to the attention garnered by *Zeitgeist*, which he says involves "a lot of quackery . . . instead of social scientific analysis." However, he also admits that, at least in comparison, *Dystopia* hasn't done that well, with only 13,000 hits on the film's website (compared to millions for *Zeitgeist* and its translations) and book sales comparable to his other academic texts. That leaves *Dystopia* with only its message as its reason for being.

The documentary is composed of alternating clips of popular movies, other documentaries, and stock or news footage, with a backdrop of ominous music. It is all narrated by Dr. Potter, to whom it occasionally cuts. To my mind, it feels too much like propaganda or a negative political campaign advertisement, hoping to generate and then capitalize on a fear-based emotional response—which is really too bad, because if you get beyond that and into the narrative, what Dr. Potter has to say is interesting and well-presented. In fact, the "lecture" portions of the film had more of an impact on me than when the message was being drowned under images. Dr. Potter speaks engagingly and honestly in the film, something I found continued when I interviewed him.

But Dr. Potter candidly states that his choice of dramatic and ominous pieces of film and soundtrack was deliberate, saying “I had an analytical message to deliver but politics . . . is a battle for hearts as well as minds; hence the dramatic imagery.”

***“Individualist consumer decisions are not the way to go . . . what is required is collective action.”***

***Dr. Garry Potter***

However, he notes that his message is not political in the traditional sense. “First,” he says, “what is required is *collective* action, political action in the broad sense. Individualist consumer decisions are *not* the way to go on this.” “Secondly,” he notes, “the politics I advocate are outside the . . . mainstream of party politics.”

Indeed, one of the repeated slogans of the movie is that humanity is faced with a choice between socialism and barbarism, and that the time remaining to make this choice in a conscious and rational manner is running out. Obviously, that’s not going to be a popular

message. And while I think Dr. Potter did himself and his film no favours by using the word socialism, since so many North Americans have a mistaken understanding of what the word means, he disagrees. “I don’t think the socialist message should be presented as something to be embarrassed about, something that should be whispered gently in case it offends,” he says. In fact, he suggests that “in a world of diminishing finite resources, rational cooperation is mandatory for our very survival.”

Whether or not you agree with Dr. Potter’s overall solution, the film also presents some smaller, specific actions that are easy to do, and which certainly can’t hurt. For example, he recommends actions like joining a boycott of Walmart, one of the most anti-humanistic corporations on the planet.

The best thing about the film is that although it certainly presents the problems we may soon face, it manages to maintain an air of optimism while still staying realistic. This leads me to my last exchange with Dr. Potter, one that I think is best presented verbatim:

**Q:** Do you realistically feel there is a chance that the world will make the choice for “socialism over barbarism”? Especially given our precedent and the sophistication/allure of the capitalist ideal?

**Dr. Potter:** Absolutely honestly? I just don’t know. I want to be hopeful and there really are some hopeful signs; say for example, the people protesting in the streets of Cairo, or the students who recently took to the streets in the UK. But of course there are contrary signs as well; and, as you say, there is the sophistication and allure of the capitalist ideal. I think that it is impossible to finally judge. Overall it is just too big a question with too many variables. So what I think is the rational perspective to take is what Gramsci suggested many years ago: pessimism of the intellect along with optimism of the will.

The film *Dystopia: What is to be done?* is freely available [online](#) and the accompanying book can be found at major retailers.





## Grâce Au Génie De Son Peuple, 2e Partie

*Entrevue avec Kamal AMARI, militant pour la démocratie en Algérie, ex-syndicaliste, membre fondateur et ex-vice-président de l'association culturelle Tahar Djaout de Tizi N' Berber, actuellement résident permanent au Canada.*

### Un Gouvernement De Transition Démocratique

Actuellement, un gouvernement idéal c'est un gouvernement de transition démocratique, formé de démocrates qui ont pour mission de préparer et mettre en place des institutions au service de l'État et non au service du régime en place, la séparation des pouvoirs, une école ouverte sur l'universalité mettant fin à une éducation au rabais. Il s'agit de bâtir une

université compétitive basée sur des normes universelles et donnant la priorité à la recherche; de séparer la politique des questions de culte et de garantir la liberté de culte. Il faut éduquer les jeunes générations à la tolérance et à l'acceptation de l'autre, en essayant d'éliminer ou de réduire les préjugés, de les éduquer à la citoyenneté . . . en un mot, leur donner une éducation citoyenne. Nous devons encourager l'apprentissage du maximum de langues possible, afin de créer des ponts entre les différentes cultures et civilisations.

Mais il nous faut mettre des garde-fous à la démocratie naissante en élisant une assemblée constituante.

### En Copiant Des Expériences Réussies Dans Le Monde

Franchement, je ne vois pas un pays bien précis à imiter, car chacun a sa spécificité. Ce qui est important ce n'est pas de citer un pays qu'on peut imiter mais il est préférable de parler plutôt de pratiques et de politiques positives ou de modèles qui ont réussi. Nous pouvons créer notre modèle tout en copiant des expériences réussies dans le monde. Moi, ce qui m'intéresse en urgence c'est d'imiter les pays qui ont réussi dans leur système éducatif.

De toute façon, tous les pays qui ont su mettre fin à la gestion centralisée pourraient sans aucun doute être une référence pour l'Algérie. Car nous avons besoin d'un modèle qui prenne en considération des spécificités culturelles, régionales. Et c'est le cas de la révolution algérienne divisée et organisée en prenant en considération ces richesses. L'Algérie est unie dans sa diversité et, si cette dernière est refusée, l'Algérie va continuer à vivre des crises chroniques.





## Une Convergence Des Peuples

Un État basé sur la décentralisation et accordant plus de prérogatives s'impose pour une cohésion sociale durable. Le fait de continuer à nier cela signifie une marginalisation d'une certaine élite qui évolue en dehors du système actuel. Mais l'Algérie ne peut pas évoluer hors d'une convergence des États de l'Afrique du Nord. Une convergence des peuples et non des chefs d'État.

## Un Rêve Simple

Mon rêve est simple et c'est le rêve du simple citoyen. C'est de voir l'Algérie libérée de sa dictature instaurer un État démocratique et, bien sûr, de voir ce système dans tous les pays à travers le monde, la fin de la guerre à travers le monde, le rapprochement entre les peuples, le dialogue entre les civilisations, cultures et religions. Voir aussi la fin du terrorisme mondial. Le savoir sera à la portée de tout le monde, car il est la clef véritable pour sauver le monde d'éventuels dérapages, comme c'était le cas des deux guerres mondiales. Je rêve de voir les dictatures à travers le monde tomber au profit de démocraties populaires.

## Le Véritable Pouvoir

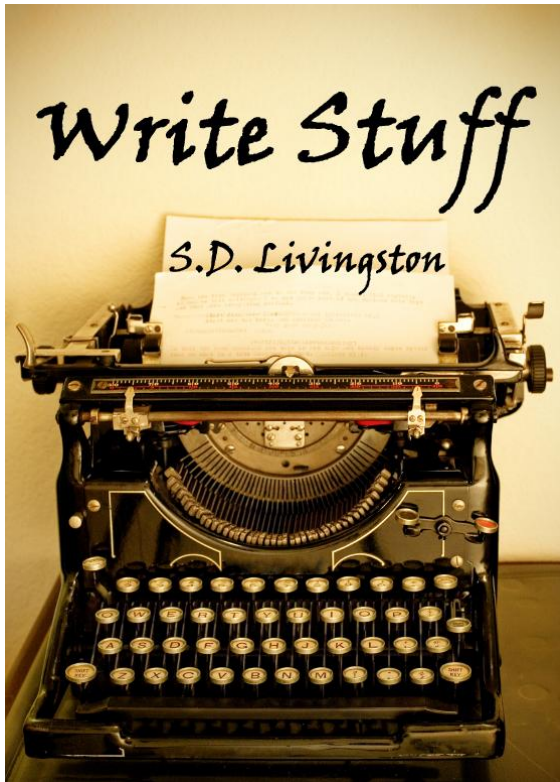
Je ne crois pas au combat par la violence. On le sait, la révolution « tranquille » au Québec a donné ses fruits grâce à la sagesse de ceux qui l'ont faite et Gandhi a su trouver la formule juste, avec sa philosophie de la culture de la non violence, et ainsi de suite. Donc, l'arme la plus redoutable pour faire aboutir les causes justes c'est la lutte pacifique, même si on nous pousse à l'usage de la violence. La violence est un langage propre aux dictateurs et aux despotes.

La seule option valable est l'action pacifique, car elle est plus redoutable. Le pacifisme est le moyen des gens civilisés et non des barbares.

Les Algériens ont marqué l'Histoire et continuent encore à contribuer à la construction d'un monde sans violence. Les Algériens sont comme tous les autres peuples du monde qui aspirent au changement. Le vent du changement a soufflé et l'Algérie ne sera pas en marge de cette dynamique mondiale. L'Algérien est par essence un militant pour les causes justes. L'Algérien est contre l'injustice et refuse la soumission.



En conclusion, l'Algérie est en train d'écrire les plus belles pages de son Histoire, en empruntant le dernier voyage de l'espoir, qui s'inscrit dans un contexte régional et mondial favorable pour une rupture radicale. L'Algérie sera libérée et soutiendra la libération des autres peuples. Je suis convaincu que le monde aspire à la paix et non à la violence. L'injustice sera bannie sur Terre; mais cela nécessite du temps, pour investir dans la connaissance. Ne dit-on pas que détenir le savoir c'est détenir le pouvoir? Le véritable pouvoir c'est le savoir.



## Under the Covers

I'm no fashionista. My writing wardrobe would give Valentino conniptions and I don't subscribe to *Vogue*. But I've been following the fashion world closely these days because of the upheaval surrounding John Galliano and the burning question many are asking. Is it acceptable to buy the designer's clothes in spite of his repugnant personal views? When it comes to literature, I've often pondered the same thing: should an author's personal beliefs affect our decision to buy his or her books?

The dilemma doesn't necessarily apply to non-fiction. There, in most cases, writers' views *are* their work. In *Battle Hymn of the Tiger Mother*, you get a pretty good idea of where Amy Chua stands on parenting and piano lessons. Same with Richard Dawkins and *The God Delusion* (sans pianos, obviously). If you disagree with a writer's stance on politics, religion, or parenting you probably won't buy her books. But what about fiction? Should our appreciation of that art form be held separate from the creator of the work?

Suppose you love science fiction. Your favourite author works magic with words and you've spent countless hours enjoying his literary creations. Then one day, he's filmed sitting in a Paris café spouting sexist rants. Or maybe you've luxuriated in a romance author's mist-covered historical plots for years and suddenly discover she's a card-carrying member of the Ku Klux Klan. Stranger things have happened. Reading someone's books or watching his movies doesn't mean we know him beyond his public persona. Just ask Mel Gibson.

It's a tough question, but ultimately I think the answer is yes. It does matter. It matters for the same reason that Michael Richards' career took a nosedive after his outburst at a comedy club. And for the same reason broadcaster Don Imus' show *Imus in the Morning* was cancelled after he described the Rutgers University women's basketball team as "nappy-headed hos."

It matters because systemic hatred like sexism and racism cause very real pain and misery for millions—and to knowingly support someone who holds those views is, however subtly, to give credence to them. In other words, we know it's wrong but we'll turn a blind eye because we like your evening wear (or stories about spaceships).

Financial support doesn't necessarily figure into it. Buying a bestselling writer's books doesn't mean she's going to use her millions to fund a neo-Nazi party. Equally, the poorest of writers can still hold sexist or homophobic views despite never hitting the Amazon Top 100.

And it's important to distinguish between plot lines and





personal beliefs here. There are a lot of unpleasant subjects out there and authors can and should address them, whether in fiction or non-fiction. Homophobia, domestic violence, gang culture: all are fair game for artistic discussion.

We don't have the right to demand that authors (or actors or fashion designers) expose their private views on every subject, any more than we should demand it of bankers or CEOs. We all have a right to our private beliefs. But when egregiously hateful views become public—either by accident or on purpose—readers must make a choice.

Because not even the most glorious fiction written can match the beauty of a world without hatred.

## CLICK OF THE WRIST: Green Me

On March 17, everyone's a little bit Irish—and for the day, green is definitely the new black, whether in clothing or hair colour or decorations or food. One of the most iconic St. Patrick's Day celebrations happens in Chicago, whose time-honoured tradition of turning the Chicago River green has been going strong for over 40 years. But unusual displays of green aren't limited to a day in March, and they're often naturally occurring. This week's links take us on a tour of unexpected greenness.

### Water

Green rivers are more than merely a local tradition or a silly prank: certain algae blooms can give water a vibrant emerald tint. And although they might look toxic, these "green pools" are home to an abundance of plant and animal life, and the interactions among them might actually, to a limited extent, help support the health of the whole planet.

### Earth

Potatoes are a quintessential Irish staple, but green potatoes aren't really something to celebrate. This article, from Purdue University, cuts through the fact and fiction surrounding the unnatural colour.

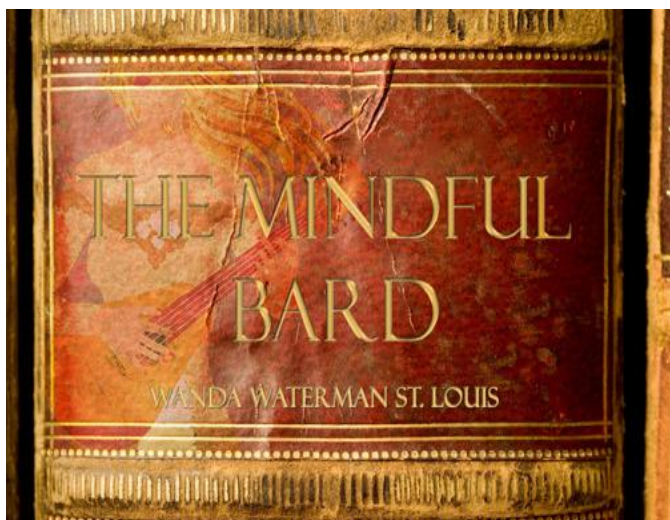
### Air

Visible at sunrise and sunset but only under limited conditions, the green flash is an elusive optical phenomenon that's sought after by weather buffs, tourists, and photographers alike. This video captures the blink-and-you'll-miss-it event.

### Fire

Move over, Maleficent; this tutorial shows how to make a relatively long-burning green fire in your own backyard. With certain safety precautions, you can impress guests at a party or just enjoy your own St. Patty's Day—or any day—chemistry experiment.





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

Album: Conjunto Roque Moreira: Sintonia Da Mata

Sing, Dance, Love Life

*“Our role is to expand the variety of music in the world and to make our fans dance, uniting them in a love of life.”*

Conjunto Roque Moreira drummer Anderson Almeida, in an interview with Wanda Waterman St. Louis

The group’s name is a loving homage to a 1970s Brazilian DJ named Roque Moreira (“Conjunto” just

means “group”) who only played the B sides of Brazilian records. His radio show also served as a connection point for listeners, a pre-Facebook social network where people could leave messages for one another. The show made a lasting impression on the residents of Piauí, where the show was broadcast (and, incidentally, where all the bandmembers grew up). The songs played in Moreira’s show influenced the band to the degree that listeners associated them with the DJ, and the name stuck.

Conjunto Roque Moreira’s music is joyful, infectious, deliciously complex, and superlatively danceable. The band’s live performances are amazing—they have a synergy that catalyzes the stage. And when you close your eyes and listen, you’ll find it hard to believe that so few musicians can produce such a multi-layered sound.

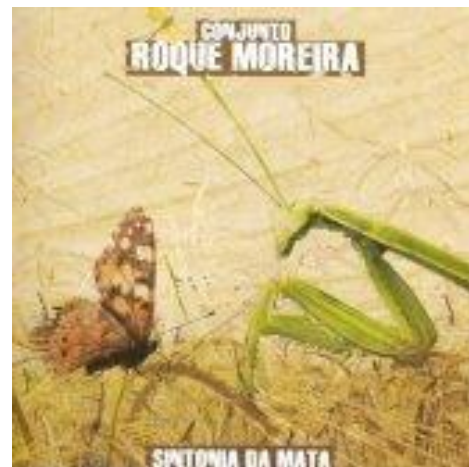
This band of Brazilian musicians is every bit as world-influenced as any self-righteous American pop celebrity, and probably more creative and socially conscious. In fact, in addition to the samba, reggae, classical, Indian, African, baião, xote, samba, embolada, repente, and bossa nova, the music also references American blues, jazz, rhythm and blues, funk, acid rock, British prog rock, and 60s folk anthems—challenging the notion that world music is any music that’s not American or British.

Another thing I adore about this band is their sideline work teaching underprivileged kids how to make and play a wide variety of musical instruments made from recycled and natural materials.

You can get their songs online here, and they’re free. Don’t understand Portuguese? Not to worry. Remember “Dominique”? “Guantanamo”? “99 Luftballons”? “La Bamba”? “Da Da Da”? Did we ever really have to know what those songs meant?

But although British chanteuse Stacey Kent has taught us that not knowing the language in which a song is sung in no way diminishes our aesthetic enjoyment, it still doesn’t hurt to have some idea what each song is about. In case you’re curious, here is a list of meanings (courtesy of band drummer Anderson Almeida):

- “‘Essa é Daqui’ (‘This is From Here’) talks about taking pride in our state
- ‘Vendedor de Cajuína’ (‘Cajuína’s Seller’) is about the power of working people (Cajuína is a



popular drink in Piauí, our state).

- ‘Lee Van Cliff’ is about this Brazilian vampire’s history.
- ‘Musico a Música’ (‘Musician to Music’) portrays the power of music.
- ‘Reggae Moreira’ tells of Roque Moreira’s history.
- ‘Magia Nordestina’ (‘Northeast Magic’) shows the way of life and the difficulties of peoples in Brazil’s northeastern dry regions.
- ‘Velho Monge’ (‘Old Monk’) talks about the main river of our city and its importance to the fishers and other people who depend on it.
- ‘Crepusculo’ (‘Twilight’) is about a meeting that begins when night arrives.
- ‘Boi de Pancadaria’ showcases a traditional Brazilian rhythm called ‘Bumba Meu Boi’.
- ‘NoNoNo’ talks about political conscience. It insists that people analyze the actions of politicians before deciding who to vote for.
- ‘A Revolta dos que não Foram’ (‘The Revolt of Those Who Were Not’) is a funny history of a little boy.
- ‘Animal Animado’ (‘Animated Animal’) shows how songs animate the animals.”

*Sintonia Da Mata* manifests eight of The Mindful Bard’s criteria for music well worth a listen: 1) it is authentic, original, and delightful; 2) it confronts, rebukes, or mocks existing injustices; 3) it renews my enthusiasm for positive social action; 4) it gives me tools enabling me to respond with compassion and efficacy to the suffering around me; 5) it displays an engagement with and compassionate response to suffering; 6) it inspires an awareness of the sanctity of creation; 7) it provides respite from a sick and cruel world, a respite enabling me to renew myself for a return to mindful artistic endeavour; and 8) it harmoniously unites art with social action, saving me from both seclusion in an ivory tower and slavery to someone else’s political agenda.



### DID YOU KNOW? ERIC

Education majors will want to enlist the aid of the Education Resources Information Center (ERIC), an “online digital library of education research and information.” This web resource, which is operated by the US Department of Education’s Institute of Education Sciences, is a fantastic research aid, particularly for students who are in upper-level classes or pursuing graduate work.

ERIC contains a “searchable, Internet-based bibliographic and full-text database of education research and information.” It’s the perfect springboard for beginning research. And although users need to register in order to customize the site fully, the resource itself is completely free.

It’s also easy to use. Even if you’re not sure of your exact search terms, ERIC sponsors a tailored thesaurus which will help you narrow broader topics to the more specific information you’re looking for.

Although ERIC provides some full-text articles, and hopes to increase its collection in the future, a number of the articles in its database are only available in synopsis form due to copyright restrictions. However, ERIC provides full bibliographic and contact information for both the articles and the journals in which they appear. Using ERIC in conjunction with journal databases like those available through AU’s library allows broader access to the actual articles. Regardless, ERIC greatly facilitates locating the materials necessary for any education research.





## From Where I Sit

Hazel Anaka

### Perspective, Perspective, Perspective

Another birthday has come and gone. The day before was spent in the city, but it was relaxed because there was no pressuring to-do list attached to our wanderings. We did the flea market circuit and added some more books to my library. Who wouldn't love a mint 99-cent copy of the 2010 Giller prizewinner *The Sentimentalists*? We then had a nice meal with Hilary before she went out to an event at the art gallery. We spent a quiet evening at "Hotel Hilary" before heading to bed much earlier than usual. Was it because she doesn't have TV and we didn't get sucked into staying up much later than makes sense?

The next morning, my actual birthday, was spent with a little hair experiment. With two different products (a curl enhancer and styling mud), clips, and a hair dryer with a diffuser, Hilary created the Hazel version of the curly look. Curls are supposedly replacing all the sleek styles created with the damaging heat of a flatiron. When the laughter finally subsided, I decided to go with it, knowing that gravity and the weight of the product would tame the tangles. They did and I love it. Whether *I* would do all that work is another question.

Which brings me to the issue of maintenance. Women notoriously spend a great deal of time primping and preening. The young ones spend time, energy, and money "getting ready," usually in the hopes of mate attraction. Older ones are intent on fighting the ravages of time.

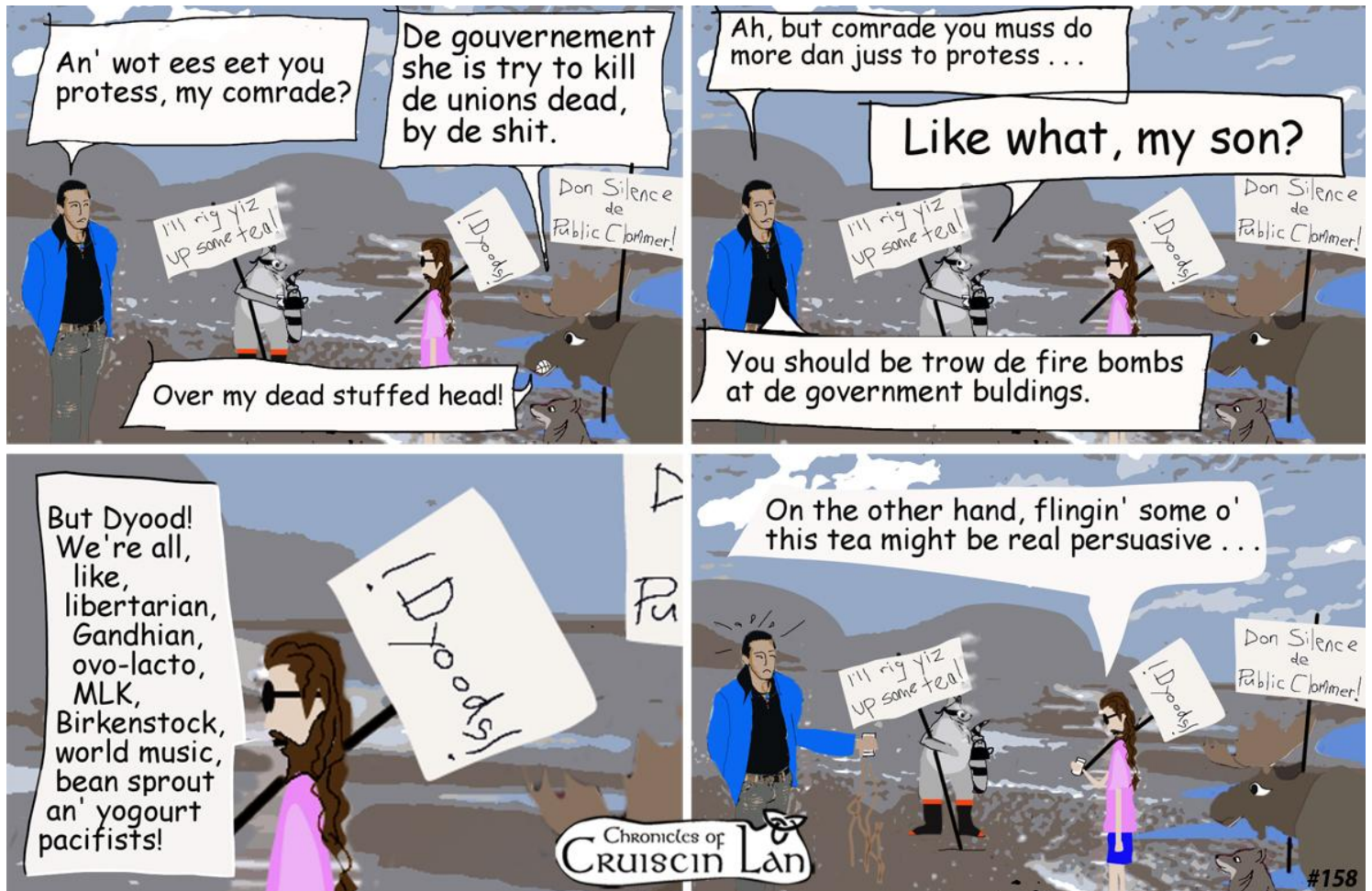
That's why we colour our grey hair. And experiment with styles and cuts that guarantee to make us look younger and slimmer and to shave hours off our beauty regime. We pluck the unwanted shoots sprouting up in unexpected places. In other places, we fill in what's missing. We augment our lashes with mascara and our brows with pencil strokes. We conceal the dark circles beneath our eyes. We use cold compresses to reduce the swelling beneath those same eyes that now need progressive lenses to carry us through the day.

We regret the lines etched in our faces by years of grimacing, scowling, and worrying. We wish we had worn sunscreen, smiled more, and taken our makeup off every single night of our lives. We wish we had exercised more, eaten less and better, and gotten more sleep. We wish we had taken notes during *What Not To Wear*. We curse or thank the genes that formed our very foundation. We see ourselves turning into our mothers, which may or may not be a good thing.

And then when sanity returns, we thank the good Lord that we lived to see another birthday. We are grateful for our straight/curly/grey/coarse/fine hair and lumpy/too big/too small breasts because cancer treatments can take it all away. We are grateful for full hips and strong legs that take us where wheelchairs and canes can't go. We grab our glasses, thankful that macular degeneration has bypassed us. Perspective saves the day again, from where I sit.

## CHRONICLES OF CRUISCIN LAN

Wanda Waterman St. Louis



## Green Light

## News, Tips, and Tricks for a Healthy Planet



Mardi Gras has passed, and the party's over for now. It's time to store the masks and revelry for another year. But what about all the beads and trinkets thrown during the parades? Storing them indefinitely can become inefficient, but sending all that trash to the landfill seems unthinkable.

One team in New Orleans has come up with a brilliant solution: turning unwanted beads into artwork. Their studio, which was rebuilt after having been devastated by Hurricane Katrina several years ago, recycles beads into original pieces in all shapes and sizes. From jewellery to decorations to lamps to tableware, their creations are giving "trash" a new life.

To begin the process, they place beads on trays and heat them in ovens and kilns, likening it to a "glass-fusing process." After the beads have begun to melt and fuse, they're removed, slightly cooled, and then shaped and let to cool completely. The works of art are then sold in the studio store. CNN has a [video](#) of the transformation from trash to treasure.

## INTERNATIONAL NEWS DESK



### At Home: The Darker Side of Snow

Snow. It's pretty to look at but a pain to shovel, and dangerous to drive in but fun to play in. However, playing outdoors in the white stuff isn't always a good time. Without proper care, those tiny flakes can cause tragic consequences.

As the CBC [reports](#), a 26-year-old Quebec man died recently when his snow fort collapsed on top of him, suffocating him. The man had been building the structure in the backyard "between two sheds" and had entered the half-built fort to enlarge the doorway when it collapsed on top of him.

When he was dug out minutes later, he had no pulse.

It's a sad reminder that snow can have a dangerous side. When building snow structures, we're advised to take certain precautions, "including making several exits" and ensuring adequate supervision. Additionally, we're urged to take extra care if there has been a mild

spell and the snow has become wetter and heavier. In that case, Richelieu-Saint-Laurent police Sgt. Yannic Parent told reporters, "it doesn't take a lot of snow to jam someone under it."

### Around the World: Wine and Song

A glass of wine and a playlist of the Vienna Philharmonic: sounds like a recipe for romance, classical style. But according to one Austrian inventor, the pairing of wine and music should happen long before the pouring stage, and it does much more than merely create a mood. And he's pioneering an invention that helps make the magic happen.

As the UK's *The Independent* [reports](#), Markus Bachmann's cleverly conceived "special speaker . . . is inserted into the fermenting grape juice to stimulate the yeast" through the classical, jazz, and electronic music it plays. This stimulation, Bachmann claims, produces a better-quality wine.

Although many scientists view the invention and accompanying claims with skepticism, Bachmann is adamant that his claims are have a valid scientific basis. According to his theory, "the sound waves from his speaker move yeast particles around, causing them to eat greater amounts of sugar, resulting in a wine that has a lower sugar content." Bachmann notes that the aging process is hastened, telling reporters that the wines will "mature earlier."

Combining music and winemaking isn't a new concept. Portuguese winery Jose Maria Da Fonseca "plays classical music" in its aging hall, and South Africa's DeMorgenzon winery extends the pairing to all stages of winemaking, playing "baroque music 24 hours a day to its vines and wines through speakers placed in its vineyard and cellar."

Bachmann is currently working with six Austrian winemakers, and their first music-tinged offerings will be available soon.



## 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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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

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