

THE VOICE

MAGAZINE

Vol 19 Iss 13 2011-04-08

Water in the Desert

Music of a revolution

Words for Sale

Evolving authorship

Fiction

Kings of the Castle

Plus:

*The Mindful Bard, Cruiscin Lan,
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, and please
indicate if we may publish your letter.



Correction

Re: "The Mindful Bard: Amanda Martinez" by Wanda Waterman St. Louis, v19 i12 (2011-03-25)

Wanda Waterman St. Louis would like to apologize for attributing the great piano work on Amanda Martinez's album, *Amor*, to Osvaldo Rodriguez (whose violin playing, by the way, is delicious) when in fact the piano player was Robi Botos.

FICTION

Adam Thackeray

Kings of the Castle



I raced with my brothers into the darkness. Our curfew had long since passed, but Cameron kept leading us further and further from home. He took long, powerful strides across the pavement while Matthew and I breathlessly trailed him, lagging far behind. Matthew, 11, was tripping on his own shoelaces and cursing under his breath. I was six, wearing a cardboard Burger King crown which I held tightly on my head as we ran. Cameron was 15 and running like he might never stop.

“C’mon guys,” Cameron barked over his shoulder. “Pick up the pace!”

We took a shortcut through Eldon Park. The wind had started to rise, and the rusted hinges of the swing set voiced disapproval as we hurried by. Our feet kicked up wood chips as we passed under the play structure—the same play structure where Cameron had once held title as “World Grounders Champion.”

At last we stopped in the old apple orchard to catch our breath. Moonlight filtered through the sway of bare branches above us, and shadows danced over our faces.

“I wanna go home,” I whined.

Cameron pulled me into a headlock and gave me a noogie. “Easy, little man,” he said. “We’ll be leaving soon enough.”

He released me, and I quickly straightened my crown in an effort to regain my dignity. I looked to Matthew for support, but he was busy cleaning his glasses with the hem of his t-shirt. He breathed a fog across the lenses and squinted at Cameron.

“We really should get home,” Matthew said. “Aaron’s supposed to be in bed by now.”

Cameron sneered. “Yes, mother.”

The wind gathered strength and blew the crown from my head. The little cardboard hat fluttered to the ground, where it came to rest amongst the rotting apples and shards of brown glass. I snatched it up, folded it a few times, and stuffed it into the pocket of my jeans for safekeeping.

Then I saw Cameron reach into his breast pocket and pull out a small packet of du Maurier Lights.

Matthew fumbled with his glasses before placing them back on his face. “Jesus!” he exclaimed. “Since when do you smoke?”

Cameron shook a cigarette out of the package and placed it between his lips as if he had been doing it his whole life. “I don’t know—last summer, I guess.” He smiled and revealed a wide row of teeth that shone in the moonlight. “The first pack made me sick like you wouldn’t believe.”

I gaped at the contraband hanging from my brother's mouth. "Mommy and Daddy are gonna kill you!"

Cameron ignored me. He was busy searching his pockets for a light, so I continued, "Cigarettes kill you, y'know!"

Cameron shrugged. "Well, I'm not dead yet."

"And they give you bad breath," I concluded.

"We all sat together for a long while in the middle of the orchard, listening to the wind . . . I could feel my brothers, their breathing loud in my ear."

Cameron reached deep into the pocket of his jeans and found a lighter. He lit up, inhaled, and blew a fairly impressive smoke ring over our heads.

Matthew fanned the smoke away with his hand. "Cam, enough. We gotta go."

Cameron frowned, turned his back on us, and began climbing one of the half-dead apple trees. The branches protested his weight with loud, dry snaps. He called back over his shoulder, cigarette still between his teeth. "Look, if you sissies are ready to go home, go right

ahead. See if I care."

He disappeared up into the tree. I could see the red tip of his cigarette, glowing brighter each time he inhaled.

Matthew called up after him in worry. "That tree's not gonna hold you!" he shouted.

Cameron ignored us.

"I wanna go home," I complained again. "I gotta pee."

"In a minute, Aaron, okay?" Matthew said. "Just hold on. Go behind one of the trees if you have to."

I held tight.

"Cam," Matthew called, "c'mon. This is stupid. Let's go home."

Silence.

The wind was growing stronger. The trees swayed violently, as if in a mounting rage.

"Cam, please!" Matthew cried.

There was a sudden loud crack. Cameron came crashing through the branches and hit the ground with a heavy, hollow thud.

Matthew raced to him. Our elder brother lay flat on his back, stunned and gasping for air.

I stood paralyzed. "Is he . . . dead?" I ventured.

Matthew lifted Cameron to a sitting position and then glared at me. “No, dummy. Just had the wind knocked out of him, I think.”

After a few moments, Cameron finally caught his breath. Then he laughed—a long, hard, wheezing laugh that I did not recognize. Then his laughter became tears and he pressed his face hard into Matthew’s shoulder.

I watched in shock. Until that night, I could not recall ever having seen Cameron cry. He leaned closer into Matthew, and his shoulders convulsed with great, hitching sobs.

Matthew patted Cameron on the back uneasily, uncertain what to do. Finally Cameron pulled himself away from Matthew’s shoulder, his red-rimmed eyes blinking away tears. He rubbed a long, wet strand of snot across his face.

“Me and Dawn are in trouble,” Cameron said. He looked over Matthew’s shoulder at me, and then lowered his voice, thinking only Matthew could hear. “She’s pregnant, I mean.”

There was a long silence. The wind continued to blow around us in quick gusts.

Finally, Matthew cleared his throat and whispered, “Are you sure?”

“Yes, goddammit. She’s been to a doctor and everything.”

“Oh,” Matthew said weakly. Having nothing else to offer, he wrapped his arm around Cameron’s shoulder and held him tight.

Cameron hung his head and began to weep once more. “I’m scared, Matty. I’m—I’m—so scared.”

I moved closer and tapped Cameron on the shoulder. He wiped his face with his forearm and turned to me. I took the crown from my pocket, unfolded it, and held it out to him.

Cameron managed a smile. He took the crown and held onto it with both hands. “Thanks, little man,” he choked out

We all sat together for a long while in the middle of the orchard, listening to the wind. We drew ourselves together for warmth. On either side of me, I could feel my brothers, their breathing loud in my ear.

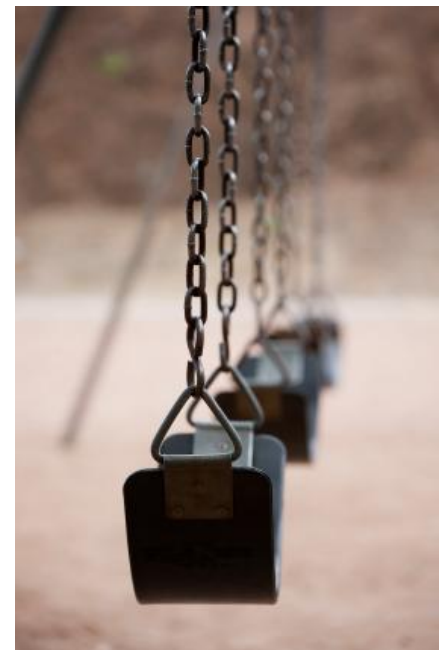
Finally, Matthew rose to his feet, took Cameron by the hand, and helped him up.

“I was just thinking,” Matthew said. “How about one game of grounders before we go home?”

Cameron sniffled once or twice, composed himself, and then nodded in agreement.

They both looked at me, expecting an argument.

I was cold, tired, and miserable. I had wanted nothing more than to go



home. But I nodded with a grin.

We sprinted to the park and had our game. Balanced atop the play structure with our eyes closed tight, we reached out to the emptiness before us and tried to find each other there.

In the end, Cameron and Matthew let me win.

Then off we ran, with the wind at our backs, pushing us forward, out of the playground and into the night. And despite the cold and wind, and as much as I had I wanted to go earlier, I could not help feeling that we were leaving all too soon.

CLICK OF THE WRIST: April Showers

With the spring weather come the spring rains, cleansing the world and making it new. And while the rain is much better than dirty, slushy snow, and we know that April showers bring May flowers, as the old saying goes, April showers bring something a little less welcome: mud. It's hard to appreciate the season when our cars, boots, and ankles are spattered with the stuff. This week's links offer some different ways of looking at the lowly muck.

Muddy Medium

Mud as an artist's palette? It worked for Spanish photographer Alejandro Maestre Gasteazi. Gasteazi photographed a progressively mud-covered friend and worked with Photoshop to create a series symbolizing a man's self-creation. The brilliant concept, according to design blog NewEvolution Designs, also "express[es] the struggles of an artist."

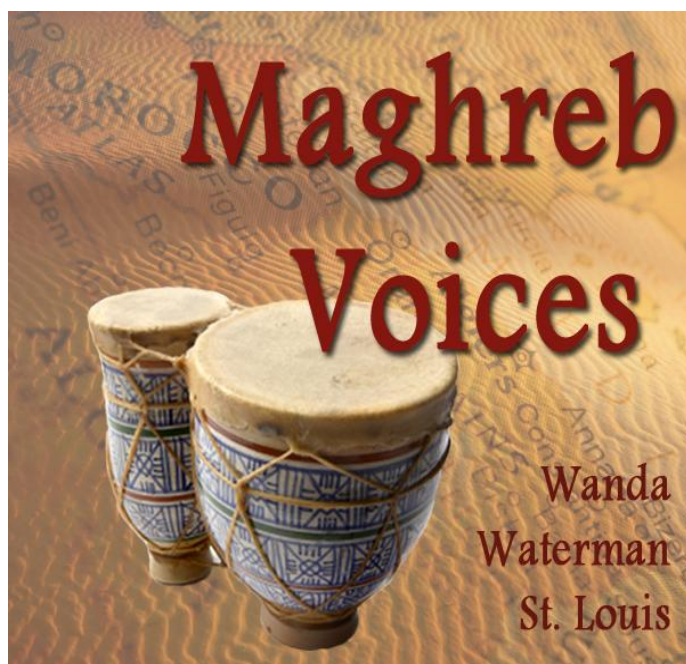
A Mud Puddle Jumped on Me

Kids may love splashing in mud puddles, but the fun isn't limited to the younger set. Camp Pendleton, in San Diego, California, hosts its "world-famous" annual mud run each summer. The race course includes giant mud puddles, and everyone finishes dirty. The *Los Angeles Times* has photos and describes the race's history.

Just Eat It

All that muck outdoors might seem anything but tasty—but mud in a different form makes one delightfully decadent dessert. Recipes for the classic southern treat Mississippi mud pie abound, but this one from Martha Stewart includes a how-to video that will get your mouth watering.





The Travelling Desert Blues Show, Part III

(Read [Parts I](#) and [II](#) of this series.)

“‘The desert is beautiful,’ the little prince added.

And that was true. I have always loved the desert. One sits down on a desert sand dune, sees nothing, hears nothing. Yet through the silence something throbs, and gleams . . .

‘What makes the desert beautiful,’ said the little prince, ‘is that somewhere it hides a well . . .’

Antoine de Saint-Exupéry, *The Little Prince*

Throughout 2010—and just prior to the start of the demonstrations and revolutions that have been

spreading across Africa and the Middle East—my Maghreb friends and acquaintances were posting YouTube videos on their Facebook pages, videos that served as an informal survey course in ethnomusicology. With songs from rai to chaabi to Tuareg to gnawa to Moroccan hip hop to Maghreb jazz, they represented every genre and genre fusion imaginable.

By watching these videos, you could get a general idea of what music and lyrics were fortifying the young and preparing them to do *something, anything*. And despite the ubiquitous availability of American pop music in that part of the world, most of this music was produced by Arabs. Much of it communicated a sense of unrest, frustration, intensely bottled-up passions, and a longing for freedom; even back in January, you couldn’t help feeling that something culturally and politically significant would soon be happening in the Maghreb, something with momentous consequences for the world at large.

The seeds of change could be seen as early as the 1990s in rai music like the song “Aïcha,” written by the famous French-born singer-songwriter Jean-Jacques Goldman and sung by the charismatic Algerian “King of Rai” Khaled. Its popularity in Europe rivalled its status in the Arab countries.

The ardent, optimistic, danceable rai music challenged stifling political, social, and religious conditions. It unsettled governments, which looked for ways to silence or candy-coat the music’s raw defiance and sensuality, and provoked the ire of Islamists, who kidnapped and/or assassinated a number of prominent rai singers (including the beloved Cheb Hasni in 1994).

Hasni’s murder created terrible grief among his fans, who saw the singer as a martyr. The emotional tide continued to rise against repressive regimes and religious groups in the Muslim world, and the assassinations ultimately increased rai’s popularity.

Music has always represented a desire for—or presented an impetus for—social change, but this is especially evident in the Maghreb region.

In the song “Aïcha,” a man sings to the girl he loves, offering her riches, poetry, and himself if only she will love him in return. Toward the end of the song is a verse meant to describe the girl’s point of view. Unlike the rest of the song, which is sung in French, this verse, the only part of the song written by Khaled, is sung in Arabic. Its translation: *“Keep your treasures./Me, I’m worth more than that./Bars are still bars even if made of gold./I want the same rights as you/and respect for each day./Me I want only love.”*

When Khaled sings this verse, the audience joins in full force. They know the words by heart. It’s the soundtrack of their own troubled lives, it’s their fervent cry for freedom, justice, and love. The words of this simple verse pose a challenge to repressive domestic and foreign governments and religious leaders, asserting that the soul cannot be bought, sold, or haggled over. There is value in the human spirit, a value that can’t be possessed or continuously subjugated.

Similarly, there is an almost sacred value in the environments that sustain human lives. Unfortunately the natural resources of the Middle East and Africa have been exploited at the expense of the very people to whom they rightfully belong, people whose freedoms have been hobbled to allow the rich and powerful to continue their unrestricted access to these resources. But Aïcha (incidentally, the name of the prophet Muhammad’s favourite wife and a matriarch beloved by Sunnis) does not want riches; she wants love, freedom and respect, and in stating this she takes the moral high ground over the suitor who offers symbols of wealth and ease.

Khaled, although Algerian, borrowed for his early repertoire many of the songs of a Moroccan group called Nass el Ghiwane. This group (the name means “the new dervishes” because of their similarity to a sect of Sufis— *ghiwanes*— who had traveled across the Maghreb bringing Islam to the various tribes there) produced music that was much more roots-oriented and less orchestral than rai. But like the rai singers, they sang about controversial subjects, earning them, too, the anger of both authorities and Islamists.

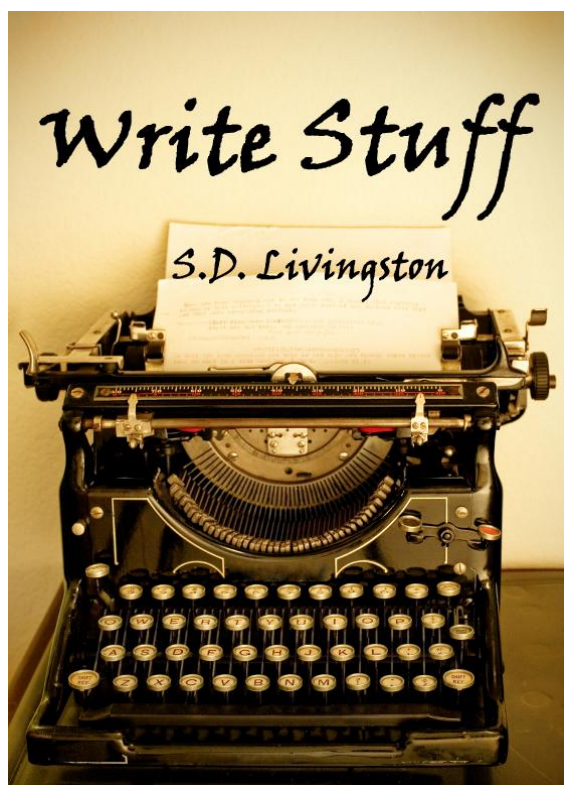
Nass el Ghiwane had spearheaded a movement to popularize traditional Maghreb genres and instrumentation, at the same time rendering them modern and accessible. Their music comprised a mix of local genres, one of which was gnawa, a genre of religious music originally brought to the northern Maghreb countries by “gnawans” from the Saharan regions of Mali, Niger, and Mauritania and later influenced by Arabic and Berber music.



But why the Sahara? What is it about this vast, hot expanse of arid sand that spawned musical influences that survived the brutality of slavery both in the Americas and in the Arab countries and that served as the leavening agent for every form of American pop music from the US Civil War until today? Why is the Sahara the historic wellspring of countless rivulets of fresh musical inspiration streaming across Africa, Europe, the Middle East, and the Americas?

To be continued . . .

This article could not have been written without the generous assistance of Driss Akjij of Meknès, Morocco.



No Comment

One man's trash, as the saying goes, is another man's treasure. I usually think of things like discarded bottles and old radios when I hear that, but there's another treasure trove being tossed around casually these days: words. Specifically, the words people contribute to online comment sections and Twitter feeds. Most of us don't give much thought to where those words end up once the conversation's finished, but others are paying close attention. And your words could end up making them very rich.

It's an interesting dichotomy, really. On the one hand we've come to expect our content to be ridiculously cheap or, better yet, free. Online newspapers face resistance to paywalls, aggregator sites flourish, and readers balk at shelling out a couple of bucks for full-length e-books. All signs point to the death of any value in the written word—until you take a closer look at the other side of that coin.

Tweets from Tahrir is a good example. Published on the heels of the protests in Egypt, the book is exactly what the title

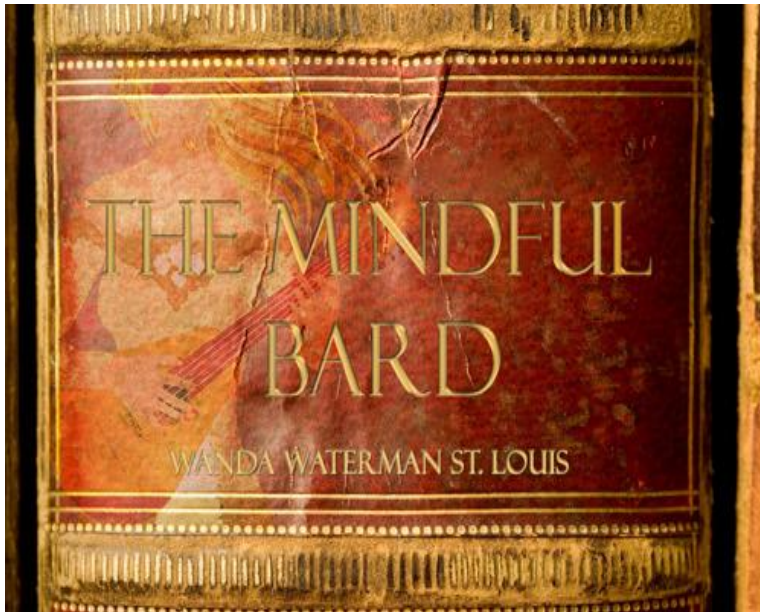
says: a collection of Tweets by those on the ground during the revolution. Individually, a 140-word post doesn't have much monetary worth. But taken together, a collection of them clearly has value even though, as one [article](#) points out, none of the book's "authors" will receive any royalties. To be fair, the publisher approached the contributors directly and asked whether they wanted to be included—but as the article also notes, an equally legal scenario would have been for Twitter itself to sell the Tweets.

And that raises an intriguing question about comment sections. Visit the fine print of just about any major news site (like *The Globe and Mail's*) and you'll find the same thing: by adding to the discussion, you automatically grant "a world-wide, perpetual, royalty-free, irrevocable and non-exclusive right and license to use, copy, adapt, transmit, communicate, publicly display and perform, distribute and create compilations and derivative works from such submitted materials."

That snippet limits *The Globe's* use to "publishing and promoting such materials in connection with the Forum or other Service through which the materials were submitted or generated," but posters also agree to waive the moral rights to their comments. A little further on, the terms allow for "all letters, articles, comments, and other material submitted for publication" to be "published, distributed and stored by *The Globe* . . . without compensation to the author."

The Globe and Mail's policy is not unusual. You can find similar terms at the *National Post* and other online papers. Some media outlets go even further and lay claim to using commenter's *ideas* without compensation.

Clearly, in spite of all the free content floating around out there, the written word still has value. If it didn't, corporations wouldn't be so eager to claim control over the ones that millions of us post online every day. Comments may be free, but don't be surprised if somebody, somewhere, is already thinking of ways to make yours pay off.



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

Album: *Magnetic Ear, Aliens of Extraordinary Ability* (2010)

Musicians: Martin Krusche, Michael Watson, Wes Anderson IV, Dan Oestreicher, Jason Jurzak, Paul Thibodeaux

“The thing that is making jazz healthy today is that people are coming out of other backgrounds—from rock, folk, from ethnic music. It’s changing the music, and for the better.”

Billy Taylor

Insatiable Consumers and Ingenious Creators of Multiple-Genre Jazz

Magnetic Ear is a six-piece brass band based in New Orleans. *Aliens of Extraordinary Ability* is their third album. By all accounts these guys have come a long way—from being a kind of sonic crazy quilt to developing into accomplished musical craftsmen who nonetheless maintain an incredible vitality and inventiveness.

This album is an exuberant dance hall crammed with blues, dub, bebop, jump, rhythm and blues, avant garde, funk, klezmer, tango, Dixieland, gospel, blaxploitation film soundtracks, and dissonant Zappaesque unison runs demonstrating a startling level of virtuosity and synchronization.

There are humorous elements in the music itself, mostly in the more Dixieland call and response sections, as well as in some of the wittier song titles (like “Dodge This, Ninja!” and “Funeral for a Lizard”).

In the midst of all the booty-shaking tracks there are a few thoughtful moments too, like in “Maus,” the one track that includes the spoken word. It is an ambient musical background to a poem written and spoken by Raymond “Moose” Jackson in a style similar to beatnik poetry but more clearly coherent and sophisticated, like Jim Morrison with a shirt on.

Why should artists listen to this album? It educates the musical ear because the quality is so superb, the genres so varied, and the playing so inspired. Such stuff is like a multivitamin for the neurons, inciting a flow of ideas.

And, as Alex from *A Clockwork Orange* might say, it inspires great vidding.

Aliens of Extraordinary Ability manifests five of The Mindful Bard’s criteria for music well worth a listen: 1) it is authentic, original, and delightful; 2) it makes me want to be a better artist; 3) it gives me tools which help me be a better artist; 4) it provides respite from a sick and cruel world, a respite enabling me to renew myself for a return to mindful artistic endeavour; and 5) it stimulates my mind.





From Where I Sit

Hazel Anaka

Happy Wife, Happy Life

I look from thermometer to window and back and again. In this winter without end, the day is overcast and the snow is heaped and piled and drifted. The glare of white on white hurts my eyes. The truth of how far away spring really is hurts my soul.

Even though I am knee-deep in planning a major event and should not even be considering taking on one more thing for at least another 10 weeks, I've got the itch. Ostensibly, when I pulled out the paint chips and design books, it was to help Hilary. She is looking to transform the nondescript beige walls in her new condo, and I'm never short of ideas.

The fact is, though, our house also is in need of a facelift. The paint is scuffed and beat-up. The baseboards are missing in at least two rooms. The walls I painted years ago in an attempt to breathe new life into them are now officially DOA and must be replaced. We also have some interior doors and trim that need to be sanded down and painted. Our 25-year-old kitchen cabinets need new doors—at the very least. Going with 42-inch uppers would bring us up-to-the-minute. The white laminate countertop has held up remarkably well, but needs to go.

Buying dream home lottery tickets hasn't worked. I don't see an addition to this house anytime soon. That's why I've got graph paper, a tape measure, paint swatches, and design magazines within my peripheral vision but just out of reach. For now.

I'm not talking to Roy about this until I formulate a plan and (maybe) do a budget. I will get shot down without some sound thinking and rock solid facts to back me up.

I am secretly looking at the load-bearing wall between the kitchen and living room. That's sure to elevate Roy's blood pressure a few notches. I know the textured ceiling finish should be scraped back to the drywall to obliterate the

scars of renovations past. I can hear the squawking now. This would all be so much easier with a spouse onside: a guy who knows at his core the truth of the statement "Happy wife, happy life."

Let me be clear: Roy has all the skills, and then some, to do whatever renovation we may undertake. What he lacks is the will and the desire. And that, my lovelies, is a bigger hurdle than lack of money.

I am a straight shooter. Manipulation and game playing are not in my repertoire. My job will be to make the case with an array of facts, an appeal to emotion and to his sense of fair play, and the promise of some sort of proposed payoff. Promising to bankroll part of it may help sell the idea.

So for the next few weeks you'll find me looking at catalogues, Googling products, getting estimates, and sketching, measuring and dreaming. Please keep my secret so I can pull this off, from where I sit.

CHRONICLES OF CRUISCIN LAN

Wanda Waterman St. Louis

**DID YOU KNOW? The Einztein Social Learning Network**

Social networking is often scorned as a time-waster, but the Einztein Social Learning Network is a different matter. Whether you're looking to pick up basic Mandarin, refresh yourself on broadcast journalism norms, or supplement your accounting class, Einztein will help you pursue your formal and informal educational goals.

The resource, freely available online, offers a portal to "explore free online courses" from institutions like Carnegie Mellon University and the University of Michigan. The user-friendly platform also links to shorter resources, such as the BBC's news writing style reference guide.

Course topics range from natural resources governance to literature to calculus, and offerings are "delivered by any combination of text, audio, video and other media." Although the courses are diverse in subject and manner of delivery, all have been carefully chosen by Einztein's editorial department "based on their completeness and quality."

But the best is yet to come. Currently, Einztein is developing tools to expand the "social" aspect of its learning network. It hopes to roll out the updates soon.

INTERNATIONAL NEWS DESK



At Home: In Treatment

The ever-present problem of alcoholism is an issue that may not be front and centre in the news, but still lurks in the background. Health care providers and governments alike have sought to lessen its effects on society, but their efforts always seem to fall short. Traditionally underfunded, the treatment of alcoholism requires significant resources in order to have long-term success. If the addiction is the elephant in the room, then its treatment is the elephant in the hospital.

That may be about to change. As the CBC [reports](#), British Columbia recently formally “recognize[d] alcohol addiction as a chronic medical condition.” It is the first province to make such an official statement.

This is more than merely a label. Treatment of alcoholism involves more time and resources than general practitioners and family doctors are usually able to provide, but the official statement means

that doctors will be compensated for the “extra time it takes” to deal with the problem. Doctors will also receive “tools to help intercept problem drinkers.”

The province hopes that the additional “time and resources” will allow patients to be treated more fully from the outset, before the addiction “becomes a bigger and more expensive problem for the health-care system and patients.”

Around the World: The Breakup

Many of us have been through—or are currently dealing with—a bad breakup. And along with the loneliness, the fear for the future, and the sense of loss that accompany the demise of a romantic relationship, few things can compare to the mental anguish such a split often brings.

Apparently, the pain isn’t limited to the metaphysical. As *National Geographic’s* Daily News site [reports](#), a new study suggests that “romantic rejection . . . causes physical pain.”

The study examined the brain scans of individuals who had been through a bad breakup within the preceding six months. During an MRI, the subjects were asked to think about the demise of the relationship. The study leaders then compared the brain scans with those from studies involving other “negative emotions [like] fear, anxiety, anger, [and] sadness.”

The results of the experiment: when thinking about romantic rejection, the subjects registered activity in “the parts of their brains that manage physical pain.”

Other negative emotions, however, did not activate the same areas of the brain, suggesting that romantic rejection brings actual physical pain in addition to emotional pain.

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.



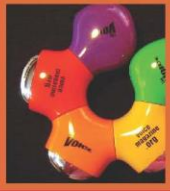



For any course that requires charts that cannot be easily created in Word or Excel, this should be a real time saver and make it easier to submit all portions of an assignment by email.

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.

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THE VOICE

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