

THE VOICE

MAGAZINE

Vol 19 Iss 15 2011-04-22

Unstuck

Wakeful dreaming

Five-Star Follies

Reviews in review

Signs of the *Times*

Paywall paydirt?

Plus:

*Maghreb Voices,
From Where I Sit,
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: Print Wars3

Articles

In Conversation With . . . Amanda Martinez, Part I5

Maghreb Voices: The Travelling Desert Blues Show, Part V.....7

Columns

Write Stuff: Five-Star Follies9

Chronicles of Cruiscin Lan 11

From Where I Sit: *The Levee* 12

AUSU Update 14

News and Events

Green Light8

Click of the Wrist 10

Did You Know?..... 11

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*

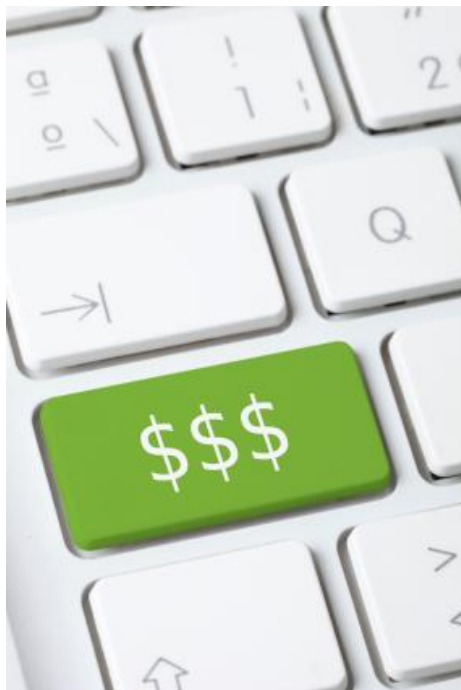
LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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



Print Wars

Want to be in the loop? To stay on top of current events, you might just have to pony up a few bucks—at least, if recent trends are here to stay.

In January, *The New York Times* rocked the media world when it announced its plan to limit the number of free online articles available to non-subscribers. Non-committed readers of *The Times* online would be restricted to 20 article views per month. And after a test run in Canada earlier this year, the *Times* went ahead with its plan, recently rolling out its new digital subscription plans—and sparking a frenzy of complaints, blog posts, discussions, and trendspotting.

The *Times* decision is rocking the media world, and not just on the consumer side. Because *The Times* is the first general-interest news magazine to attempt such a strategy, other publication execs are carefully watching. The future of newspapers and magazines is in the offing: print publication sales have been declining thanks to the proliferation of free online information, and many publishers are

scrambling to recoup lost revenue. Some see the *Times* subscription strategy as a last-ditch effort to make peace with the Internet.

It's not going to work.

The *Times* philosophy seems reasonable on its surface. They provide services (quality journalism, news, and commentary), and consumers pay for it. It's what the publication has been doing for years; the only difference is the medium through which the services are provided.

But that difference is extremely significant. Accessions to social media and ease of work-arounds aside, *The Times* displays little foresight when it fails to acknowledge how much the brave new world of media is constantly changing. The last five years have revolutionized the way many of us communicate, and if the publishing world doesn't stop looking at the web as yet another traditional form like print, it's written its own death sentence.

The Times believes that committed readers will pay for the news they want. But a recent survey found that 90 per cent of Canadians would take their business elsewhere if faced with a paywall like *The Times* has erected. And incredibly, a staggering 70 per cent indicated that they would simply not pay to access online news—even “if there were no free alternatives left.”

That's how firmly ingrained in society is the belief that online news content should be freely available.

How much are you willing to pay for the news? The New York Times has new online limitations: users are limited to 20 article views per month, unless they're willing to pay nearly \$4 per week for full access.

While the subscription model may have worked for the heyday of print publications, it's no longer relevant in an age where information gathering has been transformed.

Simply put, people don't access content, particularly news-based content, in the way they did 50—or even 10—years ago. This is the age of aggregate news sites, Twitter feeds, instant information at our very fingertips, as we cradle our smart phones. Smart searching automatically tailors our search results to increase their relevance. We're used to getting what we want, fast—and then getting out. And we don't expect to pay for it.

"Publishers . . . continue to make their online presence a duplicate of their print publication because it offers them 'the illusion of control.' And that's hurting them . . ."

But the big publications don't get it. *Times* vice-president for paid products Paul Smurl insisted that "people are more used to paying for digital content with the advent of apps and the app store." However, he's ignoring the bigger picture. While users do purchase apps, the situation is quite different. Angry Birds aside, many apps are content-driven, but they are typically inexpensive (especially compared with, say, the *Times* e-subscription plans). More importantly, though, smart

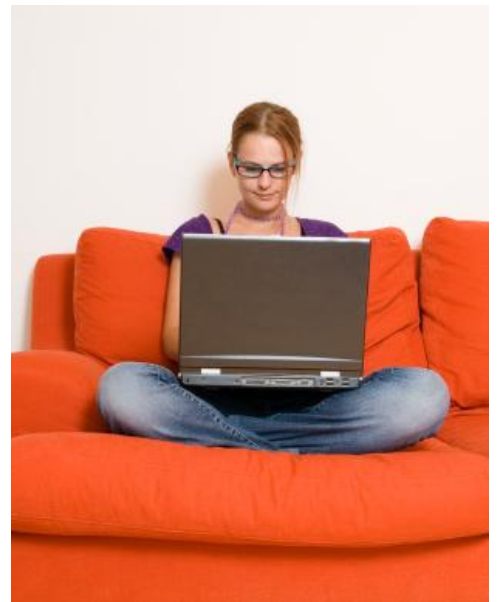
phone apps tend to be more specialized, almost individually tailored. In fact, most apps are incredibly niche-specific, and that trend has overshadowed much of the development of more general apps for smart phones and tablets.

It's not surprising, then, that iPad magazine versions haven't been doing nearly as well as expected. And while *PC Magazine* suggests that the root cause is a mishmash of privacy issues, tussles with the Apple store, and the newness of the iPad itself, I think the real culprit is the magazines' failure to engage the new reality of modern communication.

Theories abound, but I think one web developer put it best: the publishers, he claims, continue to make their online presence a duplicate of their print publication because it offers them "the illusion of control." And that's hurting them because consumers are accustomed to controlling their own information gathering experiences.

For example, the developer points out, we're used to obtaining our information "fast," and we want it personalized. "Even the nichiest magazine," he says, "is going to have a lot of content that a reader doesn't want." Add in social networks, and the fact that much of what's online already is free—and you have a recipe for disaster.

The future will tell whether the new *Times* strategy will be successful both financially and socially. But regardless of whether the news magazine makes up its deficit, until publishers acknowledge that the new information highway requires a whole new navigation system, they'll find themselves increasingly on the off-ramp to nowhere.



IN CONVERSATION WITH . . .

Wanda Waterman St. Louis

Amanda Martinez, Part I

Amanda Martinez is a Canadian singer-songwriter of jazz and Latin music. In 2010 she performed in Johannesburg, South Africa as part of the FIFA Fan Fests during the World Cup celebrations. She recently released her second album, *Amor*, produced by George Seara (who also has worked with Holly Cole, Herbie Hancock, and Sting). *Amor* reached number one on the iTunes World Music Chart in 2009 and was one of the Top 10 albums on the iTunes World Music Charts for 2010. (See the Voice review of *Amor* and Amanda's



first album, *Sola*, [here](#).)

Amanda recently took the time to talk with Wanda Waterman St. Louis about the nuts and bolts of following your dreams.

Early Listening

I was born in Canada and my dad is Mexican, so I got my Latin feel from him and my love of music from all the music he would play for me as a child. I studied classical piano throughout my childhood and teen years. I studied ballet as well. I participated in high school musicals, and that introduced me to the stage.

My mother is South African and she really loves music also. They both have this really diverse collection of music, so I would spend hours in my parents' bedroom, just listening to their records. I was never really in touch with the contemporary music that was playing on the radio; I was always listening to their music collections and I guess that's what's influencing me now.

I would listen to everything from Cleo Laine to Alice Regina, Silvio Rodriguez, and Pablo Milanés. I would also listen to a lot of classical music that my dad would play from different ballets.

Just a Dream . . .

For me singing was a fantasy. I thought it would be so cool to be a singer, and I always dressed up and sang to my imaginary audience. But I never considered it a career option because my parents were always encouraging me to pursue something more practical; they really supported me by coming out to hear me, but thought of my singing as a hobby. And I didn't really have any musician friends growing up, so it really was just a fantasy.

"I still had this dream inside of me that was eating away at me . . . I realized that I had to give it a go—I had to follow my heart."

I studied international finance and I specialized in Latin American finance, and my functional specialization was marketing. After working for less than a year in trade finance on the marketing side, I just realized that I still had this dream inside of me that was eating away at me . . . all of a sudden I felt really claustrophobic. I thought, *Oh my God, this is my life and I'm never going to realize that dream!*

I took some time off work and realized that I had to give it a go—I had to follow my heart.

. . . or Destiny?

I really jumped into it about 10 years ago. I just walked into a jazz club in my neighbourhood and asked if I could sing for them and they started giving me a weekly gig . . . from there I was just determined to make it work.

Family

I have a little two-and-a-half year old and I'm married to a musician whom I met five years ago. I met my husband Drew when I was already well immersed in the music scene. At the time I was hosting Café Latino and JAZZ.FM91, and [Drew] was a friend of the guitarist I'd been working with. He loves my music and he's become part of my band. He helped me with the musical direction of my latest album.

Our little boy really loves music, too. He loves coming to the shows, and he's got his own little drum set. He always wants to hear my CD before he goes to bed, and he loves when we have rehearsal at the house and he gets to watch.

On Songwriting

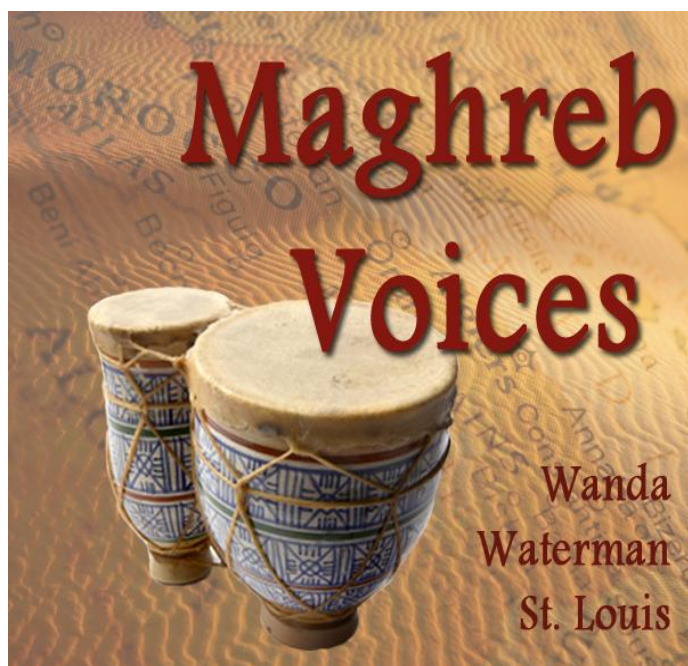
For the first album I just came up with a lot of ideas for the songs on my own and then brought them to Kevin Laliberte to play his guitar with me, and he would add more intricate chord progressions. For a couple of the songs I just brought the idea, what I wanted to do with the band as a whole, and then we just improvised together and came up with the song from scratch.

I've recently been writing with some musicians in Miami and there we've just been creating on the spot, but not with any preconceived ideas. There is no one way that I work; it's all experimenting.

To be continued . . .



Above: Amanda Martinez. Photo: Joanne K.



The Travelling Desert Blues Show, Part V

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

“Standin at the crossroad, babe,

risin sun goin down . . .

I believe to my soul now,

Poor Bob is sinkin down . . .

Robert Johnson, “Cross Road Blues”

The most immediate interpretation of the crossroads metaphor is that it signifies the juncture at which the musician crosses over from the banal world of practicing and studying into the supernatural world of magical ability. You hand the mysterious man your guitar, he tunes it, shows you a couple of licks, steals

your soul, and all’s well that ends well until you realize that you’ve traded eternity for the doubtful privilege of being a guitar god.

But like most metaphors, the crossroads symbol carries many meanings. We can also see it, for example, as the place where raw materials meet refined goods, where Africa meets Europe, where heaven meets earth, or where the future hooks up with the past.

It’s a concept often seen in the works of both desert musicians and Mississippi hill country blues players. There, one finds a single-minded devotion to modal forms and raw, essential lyrical matter, yet at the same time a delighted fascination with modern technology and methods. When he was finally able to quit sharecropping and gain access to a studio, blues man R.L. Burnside threw himself into electronic experimentation and recording with alacrity. In the latter part of the 20th century, desert nomad musicians became huge fans of American guitarists and managed to adopt some of their techniques without being imitative.

The Sahara is one place where the primitive is kept alive in spite of an urgent necessity to embrace the modern. As such it mirrors a key element of the human condition: our inability to abandon the past and really move on. Karl Marx was wrong; life did not completely change in response to the screeching gears of the age of industry. As recent wars and revolutions have shown, we’re still living in the days of Abraham, Isaac, and Ishmael, of Achilles and Hector, of Nefertiti and Tutankhamun, of peoples still roused to protest, of vengeance, and of social action, all with the ancient stories as backdrops.

As Northrop Frye wrote nearly 30 years ago in *The Great Code*, the poet’s role is to keep alive and vibrant the primitive language modes in the midst of the flux and ephemera of modern life—to sustain the



crossroads, as it were. There are poetic spaces on this planet that bear up well under this responsibility. Not surprisingly, they are usually those environments requiring very precarious and specialized existences, existences that often plummet the individual to the depths of existential despair. Although I would stop short of calling this a good thing, despair is in fact one of the more enriching elements in the world of art.

Take, for instance, these blues lyrics from Lonnie Johnson: *“So tired of sighin’./So tired of cryin’./I’m so tired of livin’ all alone./All my days seem weary./The skies seem dreary./And I’m all alone and where must I roam?”*

And those from an old nomad poem from the anthology *al-Majani al-haditha*, published in 1946:

“I am tired of the burdens of life; make no mistake, whoever lives to fourscore years grows tired. I know what is happening today and what happened yesterday, but I cannot tell what tomorrow will bring. I have seen the Fates stamp like a camel in the dark; those they touch they kill, and those they miss live on to grow old.”

Where despair starts walking, religion is not long to follow, and yet the religions of the peoples of these sorts of places are altered by the converts in response to exigencies of the environment. When, for example, Christian missionaries told Inuit women that they must wear skirts, the women acquiesced by wearing bright flowing skirts over their heavy—and very necessary—leggings.

Similarly, Islam reached the nomadic tribes because of Sufis who traveled the Sahara spreading their own mystical version, which turned out to be more adaptable to desert life than were the more legalistic dictates of the Sunnis. The desert tribes, because of constant travelling and a desperate daily struggle for survival, often found it impossible to keep to the rigorous schedule of prayers, charitable donations, mosque visits, and pilgrimages more suited to the affluent village bourgeoisie. Their lives were more adaptable to Sufism, with its emphasis on mystical experience and attentiveness to God.

To be continued . . .

Green Light

News, Tips, and Tricks for a Healthy Planet

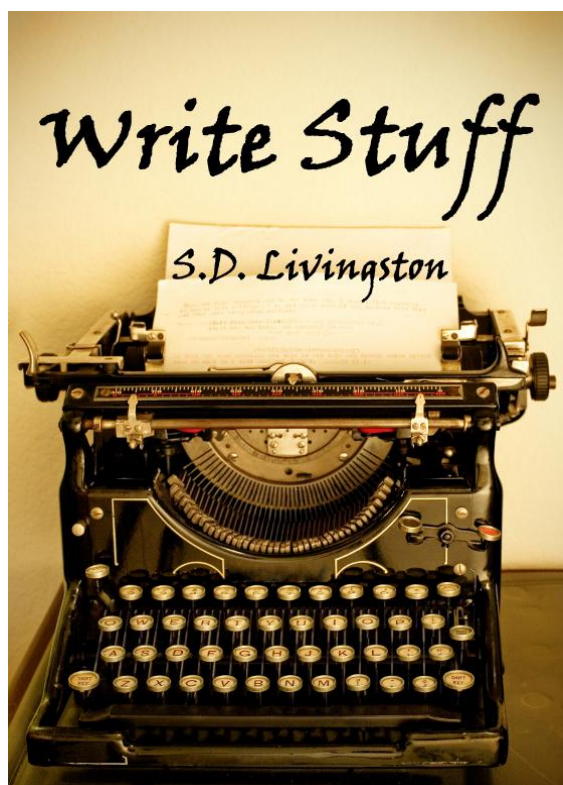


For the past few years, those oddly-shaped compact fluorescent light bulbs (usually called CFLs) have been embraced by both serious and “weekend” environmentalists (with the EU even announcing its plan to phase out incandescent bulbs by the end of 2011). And why not? After all, switching over to CFLs saves energy, sparing the planet and conserving resources for the future.

But, as *The Voice* reported last fall, the news isn’t all good. CFLs have been found to emit high levels of what researchers called “dirty electricity,” a phenomenon linked to poor health and the exacerbation of pre-existing conditions.

Now new research from Germany suggests that CFLs may even be carcinogenic.

More studies are needed, but in the meantime researchers suggest avoiding using CFLs in “unventilated areas” and “in the proximity of the head.”



Five-Star Follies

You need to buy a gift and you know just the thing: a book. Maybe you'll spring for a gorgeous coffee-table book on gardening for your mom. Or maybe you want to add a horror novel to your best friend's e-reader. But you're not into gardening, and the closest you've been to the horror genre is *The Devil Wears Prada*. No problem. Just check out a few online reviews and click the buy button, right? Not so fast. If you don't know what to be wary of, you could end up being hoodwinked by an authors' feud—or falling for some playful (but less than accurate) rankings.

Traditionally, we've gotten book-buying advice from trusted sources. A favourite newspaper's review page, recommendations from friends, or a casual mention by a librarian. But these days reviews and rankings are everywhere, from blogs to retail sites, and it can be hard to know which ones to trust.

If you're in a hurry, it can be tempting to simply go straight to a retailer's Top 100 section. Unfortunately, those sales rankings are all too easy to manipulate, and it's a subject that's had a lot of attention lately (this [Teleread article](#) sums up one case).

Even when they're legitimate, high sales rankings and bestseller lists are no guarantee of a good read. For instance, Jean M. Auel's *The Land of Painted Caves* has spent over three months on Amazon's Top 100 and has climbed into the top 10 as of this writing. It's also high on *The New York Times* hardcover bestseller list. Yet the majority of reviews at sites like [Goodreads](#) give it only two or three stars, and the *Globe and Mail's* [response](#) to the novel was lukewarm. That doesn't mean you won't enjoy the book, but it is a good reminder to dig a little deeper, especially if it's an author or genre you're not familiar with.

So if sales rankings aren't a good yardstick, what about those reviews and ratings from other readers? Well, the dozens of Amazon five-star ratings for *How to Avoid Huge Ships* offer an amusing insight into why those rankings also need to be evaluated carefully. From what I can tell, the title itself is legitimate—and self-explanatory. It's also attracted over a hundred tongue-in-cheek reviews that include gems like this one: “[H]uge ships are everywhere and it doesn't help that the [TV] and movies make huge ships seem glamorous and cool. This book helped me really approach the subject of huge ships with my kids in an honest, open and non judgmental way.”

It's all in good fun and clearly not meant to dupe people out of their money. In fact, whimsical reviews have become a sub-genre all their own; you can find links to several more in this [Cracked](#) article. Even if you don't get a chuckle out of them, they offer at least eight good reasons to look beyond those little gold stars.



And in case you think the art of rogue reviews is strictly the domain of anonymous posters with too much time on their hands, it's worth noting that many such reviewers use their real names—and that sometimes, review systems are manipulated by respected authors themselves.

One of the most high-profile cases comes from the world of academia, involving an Oxford University professor no less. The story hit the popular media, including the *Guardian*, about a year ago. Orlando Figes, a professor of history at Birkbeck, London, wasn't content to anonymously post glowing reviews of his own book at Amazon UK. He also used a pseudonym to dismiss his academic rivals' books as "awful" and "hard to follow."

In the growing online maze of reviews, ranks, and listings, perhaps the best way to find candid book-buying advice is to blend the old with the new. Spread your net wide over the abundance of choices, and you'll soon narrow it down to a few favourites you can trust. They might be bloggers who write regular reviews, or usernames you begin to recognize from retail sites and social forums. They might even be familiar standbys like established media columnists. And who knows? You might just discover a few five-star friends.

CLICK OF THE WRIST: Eggstravaganza

This weekend, artistry will abound as countless adults and children decorate eggs in recognition of the Easter holiday. But decorative eggs are about more than a supermarket kit with shockingly bright colouring tablets. This week's links take a look at some of the more egg-celent artwork out there, both created by nature and by people.

Work of Art

It's hard to match the beautifully decorated East European Easter eggs, but although the procedure is complicated, it's not completely inaccessible to the uninitiated. This excellent video tutorial explains how to make Ukrainian *pysanky* and describes the history and symbolism of the craft.

Eco Eggs

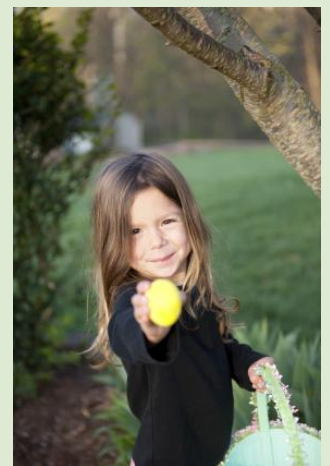
If you want to go the traditional dyeing route, but aren't a fan of using artificial colouring, try a more natural solution. *Kiwi* magazine describes how to use berries, vegetables, and spices to make food-based dyes.

By Birdie

You can also let nature take care of the colouring job and enjoy the many variations in egg color and appearance that occur among different species of birds. This 2010 article, from LiveScience, explains the origins of some of the patterns—and suggests that there's much more that doesn't meet the (human) eye.

Ancient Beauty

Exotic eggs aren't just pretty to look at, they give us important clues to the past (and, by extension, the present and future). This 1996 interactive feature by *National Geographic* allows users to explore the finding, collection, and interpretation of fossilized dinosaur eggs.



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.



From Where I Sit

Hazel Anaka

The Levee

In February I had the good fortune to visit Baton Rouge, Louisiana. Roy was there as part of a contingent from Alberta's Industrial Heartland, meeting with experts and touring similar facilities. While he put in full days of work, I was free to tour the sites.

One of the places I visited was Cottonwood Books on Perkins Road. Because of its typically crowded style (like most unfamiliar used bookstores), it is not a place you can hurry through. And while another wife, Carolyn, and I looked around, I was very cognizant of dear, patient Wayne, another delegate's husband (and our amenable driver), who was sitting in the rental car reading a travel guide. It was my request to go there and I didn't want to push my luck. So I hurried and got focused.

The Cottonwood carries a mix of new, old, and rare books. I asked the owner if there was a definitive title that would be a good souvenir of my trip. In hindsight, that was a loaded, hopeless, and silly question. Did I want one of the dozens of books written about assassinated Governor Huey Long, who left Louisiana forever changed by his public service? Or how about one of many on the majestic old plantations? Maybe an illustrated one covering the flora and fauna of the state? Or perhaps one about cemeteries, Mardi Gras, Cajun cuisine, or countless other subjects.

As it turns out, I bought a book written by the bookseller's friend and fellow Baton Rouge resident, Malcolm Shuman. The novel, *The Levee*, is based on the true story of a murder that took place more than 50 years ago.

While I'm only a third of the way through the book, I love it. I find myself savouring it rather than rushing headlong through it. I love a good whodunit as much as the next person, and Shuman's approach is unique. We hear the narrator's voice alternate between that of the teenage boy he was at the time of the teacher's death and him at age 63 as he struggles to put a nightmare to rest.

Best of all, however, is the way the book takes me back to my short visit to the area. It reminds me of landmarks and place names. I can feel the atmosphere. I remember the low-hanging fog some mornings. I toured a plantation and know what an alley of live oaks looks like. I walked along the levee behind the Hilton. I know how, even so many years after his death, people still have affection for Huey Long. All of these specific, accurate details enrich the experience of reading this book and add to the author's credibility. Surely, if he got those details right, I can trust him with others that I am less familiar with.

Which brings me to the profound question: does reading enhance the travel experience, or does travel enhance the reading experience? With a great book in hand, it doesn't matter at all, from where I sit.

INTERNATIONAL NEWS DESK



At Home: Easy Riding

As the federal election approaches, knowledge of current candidates, parties, and their platforms is a must. But frequently, the past is equally important—especially if you’ve got a thing for elections history. What percentage of the vote did your party get in your riding last election? How do voting patterns compare over the past decades?

Wading through online data can be time-consuming though, and one Canadian entrepreneur has created an app to allow iPhone users to get the results they want immediately.

As the *CBC reports*, Torontonians Colin Biggin recently developed the “Canada Elections” app, available for iPhone and iPad, which includes “all of Elections Canada’s data” for federal elections dating back to Confederation. The app will also “be updated with 2011 election results” this spring.

A self-described “election nerd,” Biggin told reporters that he was “always looking up stuff on the Elections Canada website.” His personal interests spurred the project, a mammoth task that involved over 200 hours of work. Will it pay off? Perhaps, but, as Biggin told reporters, “[Y]ou have to follow what you’re interested in.”

In the future, Biggin hopes to continue his work, creating similar apps for provincial elections and perhaps forging a partnership with Elections Canada.

Around the World: Older and Wiser

You can’t teach an old dog new tricks, the saying goes. While that’s often used to cast doubt on the efficiency of older employees in modern workplaces, a recent study suggests that in terms of workplace productivity, age and experience are preferable to youth and adaptability.

As the *Daily Mail reports*, “older staff are more productive than their younger colleagues,” even though physically they may not be as strong.

The study, which involved production line workers at a German Mercedes-Benz factory, suggests that it’s the experience—perhaps even wisdom—that allows older employees to work more efficiently and effectively. For example, they are better at teamwork and have greater “success at coping when things go wrong.” They also tend to make fewer severe errors than more junior staff members.

Additionally, the “younger, more highly educated workers were less productive than those who had fewer qualifications—perhaps because the educated workers got bored more easily.”

The results may spur a policy shift in companies previously subscribing to the notion “that older workers should be made redundant to boost productivity.”

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.