

THE VOICE

MAGAZINE

Vol 19 Iss 17 2011-05-06

Dead or Alive?

It tolls for you

Sister Act

The women tell all

ACHOO!

Coping with allergies

*Plus:
From Where I Sit
Write Stuff
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.



EDITORIAL

Christina M. Frey



Dead or Alive

Well, he's dead.

Or is he?

US President Barack Obama's Sunday announcement that security forces had located and eliminated long-time enemy Osama bin Laden met with a wide variety of responses. There were serious discussions of international security. There was political nastiness from both sides. There were, of course, a host of conspiracy theories. And then there were the jubilant celebrations—bonfires, drinking,

exuberant Facebook posts, even commemorative t-shirts—that spread throughout the country like wildfire.

And as the party spread, an unsettling thought invaded my mind: Osama bin Laden is indeed alive.

But not in the way you think.

Forget questions of politics, conspiracy theories, arguments of war and security, and the like. The old sayings suggest that our true character is known when we hit hard times—how do we respond to challenges? But I think that an even higher level of character is tested when we “win.”

It's like a kid on a baseball team. Sure, sportsmanlike behaviour requires losing with good grace. But it also requires winning with good grace, and sometimes that's a lot harder—especially when the stakes are high. So from one perspective, jubilantly celebrating another's death is like a little kid wagging his finger in front of his losing opponent: embarrassingly childish.

But it's worse than that. I've been told countless times that *he was an evil man, he destroyed thousands of lives, he had plenty of chances*. And I'm not going to argue those points. But what did bin Laden stand for? Oppression? Hatred? Abuse of power? Manipulation by twisting religious fervour? Spreading anger and division? Destruction of lives? Aren't we all better off without one like him in the world?

Maybe, unless our own attitudes and emotions make us into new versions of the man.

One Jewish scholar put it best: “Relief is appropriate,” she writes, but it needs to stop there. “Celebration may just cross over a spiritual line.”

She elaborates, explaining that while we might feel “a need to cry out in joy . . . these knee-jerk reactions should be tempered by the larger question of what a human life is worth.” All the more if that life was wasted by hatred, anger, and wanton disregard for the life of others.

Celebration of death may be understandable, but gradually losing our respect for life lowers our humanity bit by bit. At what level do we begin to approach a bin Laden-esque view of the value of human life?

That's definitely nothing to celebrate.

HEALTH MATTERS

Katie D'Souza

**It's Allergy Season!**

Now that spring is finally here, many of us are feeling the familiar sensation of seasonal allergies creeping up on us. It's unpleasant, annoying, and can even be debilitating. In this article, we'll explore why allergies occur, and investigate some natural options for relief.

What Are Allergies?

A healthy immune systems is always in a state of vigilance, distinguishing the harmful substances from the benign. It's

when this state of vigilance goes awry and turns hyperactive that allergies develop. Immune hyperactivity causes the body to react to substances like pollen or dander by producing antibodies—and creating more for the future.

These stored antibodies bind to the surfaces of cells called mast cells. Then they live in “waiting” mode; but when the body re-encounters the original allergen, the mast cells do their job and release certain chemical compounds like histamine. This influx of compounds causes the familiar allergy “symptoms”: itchy eyes, runny nose, and more.

Why Me?

Why do seasonal allergies plague only some of us? Unfortunately, there isn't one easy answer. Some of us have allergies because our immune systems are genetically predisposed toward hyperactivity. Others developed allergies when young, possibly the result of a bacteria imbalance in the gut (see below). Some of us became allergic after an infection. But for many sufferers, the answer has yet to be discovered.

What Can I Do?

Fortunately for allergy sufferers, there are some natural options that may offer some relief.

Nutrition: First, check your eating habits. Consuming antioxidant-rich foods like blueberries can reduce allergy symptoms, but sufficient quantities are necessary for this effect. An average adult should consume up to one pint of mixed berries per day to generate results.

Probiotics: Probiotics—friendly bacteria harboured in your gut—are necessary for health, contributing to good digestion and assimilation and manufacture of nutrients (for more on probiotics, check out the *Voice* article series, [Part I](#) and [Part II](#)). Because probiotics also keep your immune system in balance, a lack of these so-called gut flora can play a role in allergy predisposition. For example, infants without adequate gut probiotics develop allergies more readily than those with normal probiotic levels and species. Supplementing your probiotic levels can be done easily over the counter, but one caution: to be effective, a probiotic should have a minimum of two billion cells, be refrigerated, and include probiotic strains like *L. acidophilus*.

Quercetin: Quercetin is a flavonoid, a naturally-occurring biochemical compound found in fruit peels and eucalyptus leaves, and it can help reduce allergic symptoms in some adults. How does it work? Quercetin

*A time to chill?
Stress affects the
immune system and
can worsen allergy
symptoms.*

modulates the histamine response from mast cells, meaning that your reaction to an allergen will be less dramatic. As a result, you have fewer symptoms.

De-stress: With our fast-paced lives, it's hard to stay in a relaxed, stress-free state. However, because stress affects the immune system, it can worsen allergy symptoms. Check out your attitude toward "must do" projects; can you approach these in a more relaxed manner? Note your shoulders. Are they tensed and raised toward your ears? (Relax them!). And what happens when you come in contact with a known stressor? Pay attention to your body's reaction. Try pausing and breathing deeply for two minutes. (Yes, the two minutes is important; Harvard Medical School's Mind-Body team has shown that it takes this amount of time, minimum, before the brain's predominant waves change to alpha waves, which are found in relaxed individuals). Some stress is inevitable, but learning to handle it well may be integral in helping you keep your allergies under control.

Although allergy season may be beginning, with some knowledge and natural tools you might not have to suffer as much this year!

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

Disclaimer: The information contained in this article is for personal interest only; it is not intended for diagnosis or treatment of any condition. Readers are always encouraged to seek the professional advice of a licensed physician or qualified health care practitioner for personal health or medical conditions.

CHRONICLES OF CRUISCIN LAN

Wanda Waterman St. Louis



IN CONVERSATION WITH . . .

Wanda Waterman St. Louis



Charge of the Light Brigade, Part I

Charge of the Light Brigade is a Toronto-based alternative band influenced by punk, rockabilly, 60s folk-rock, techno, and prog rock. It's known for its thoughtful, evocative lyrics and has recently released a debut album, The Defiant Ones.

A previous solo release by the group's songwriter and guitarist, Luke Sneyd, included an early demo of his track "The Prisoner"—a finalist in the Unisong International Songwriting Contest. The video won him a Top 5 spot in the Great Canadian Band Challenge. Recently, Luke

took the time to answer Wanda Waterman St. Louis's questions about the band's beginnings and the songwriting process.

How It All Began

As to the band's origins, I started working with Marc Koecher (keyboards, guitars, and vocals) back in 2004. Our first collaboration was for a short serial killer thriller, directed by Paul Thompson, called *Where the Wild Things Go*. I wrote the script and produced the short, and Marc composed the music for it, adding a great Bernard Herrmann-esque string arrangement to the film. We also recorded one of my songs as background music for a bar scene in the movie.

We hit it off, and out of that friendship came some solid work, Marc producing two solo releases of mine: *All of Us Cities* (2007) and *Salvo* (2009). [While] touring to support my solo stuff, my band expanded to include Zack Mykula (drums) and Jason Eagan (bass and vocals). Their contributions made for a more organic and integrated sound. When the four of us settled into recording new material in 2010, it was clear to us that a new direction had taken hold, and Charge of the Light Brigade was born.

Zack left to form his own band (Topanga) and drummer Owen Tennyson took his place, which couldn't have been more perfect if it had been planned from the start—his last name [was] the same as Lord Alfred Tennyson (absolutely no relation), the author of the original "Charge of the Light Brigade" poem.

The Writing Process

I build tall metal contraptions and wait for lightning to strike. No, capturing the creative process is hard, because it's so incidental. A lot of songs come from noodling on the guitar, throwing around chords, trying to surprise myself and do unexpected things. That's the easy part. I could write a dozen songs a day if that were all there was to it.

"Mayhem can certainly be inspiring, but who can live that way all the time? Creating havoc in your personal life to fuel creativity is a bad recipe for living . . ."

Lyrical inspiration is harder—sometimes bending words around a melody that’s already taken shape, sometimes taking an idea or a phrase and making a song from that. “Fastest of the Losers” came from a phrase I heard during the last Olympics, which struck me as an oddly fascinating juxtaposition. Throw in a lovelorn outsider, and boom: *Houston, we have a rock song*.

Sometimes a tune or lyric just pops into my head almost fully formed. “The Defiant Ones” was like that. Once I’ve got a good chunk of a song sorted out I take it to the band, and they add their ideas. That’s a kind of sculpture, trowelling on layers, defining parts. And songs can change dramatically. “All You Are to Me” started out as a driving new wave rocker, but one day Zack started playing it with a shuffle beat, and the song came to life in a completely different way. And Marc’s production adds a lot of mood and texture to the band’s material.

The Necessary Conditions for Creativity

Don’t know that there’s any special precursors for creativity. Mayhem can certainly be inspiring, but who can live that way all the time? Creating havoc in your personal life to fuel creativity is a bad recipe for living. I draw on my experience and I watch the world keenly. Works for me.

What’s in a Name?

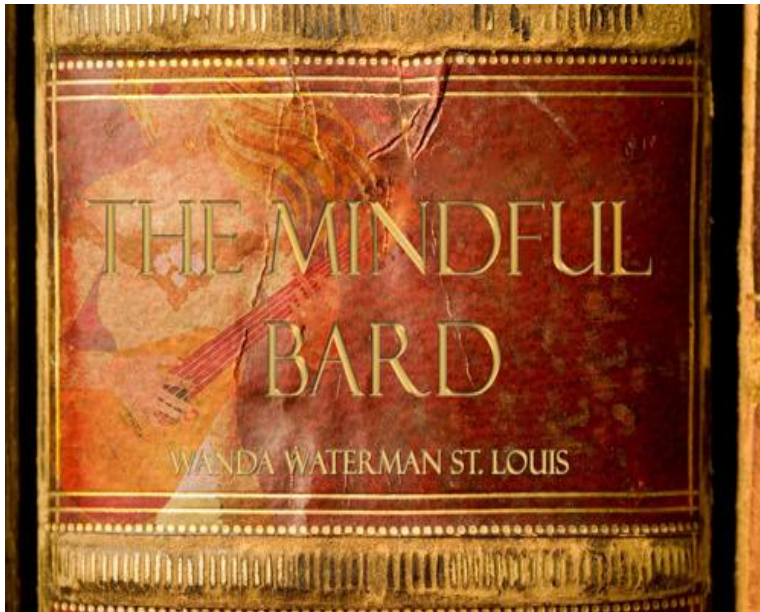
We take our name from the famous poem by Lord Alfred Tennyson. It describes the heroic but doomed charge of the British cavalry in a battle during the Crimean War. The soldiers faced insurmountable odds but took to the field regardless, and consequently were slaughtered by enemy cannons. The poem is a testament to their courageous nobility but also [to] the senselessness of their fate. I find this disparity endlessly fascinating, and it seems to encapsulate the nature of life itself. The band is fiercely individualist, blending equal parts of romanticism and existentialism. Life is a constant struggle, its worth determined by the values we uphold and the bonds we maintain.

A Typical Rehearsal

We’re all more or less on time. It’s relaxed, locker room banter. Sometimes, there’s beer. But a lot less often than you’d think. We roll through our repertoire, jam out a new idea here or there. Inevitably Jason plays a Rush bass line ’til Geddy Lee’s falsetto overstretchs the limits of his vocal range. Owen knows everybody that rehearses in the building, so any break stretches out as he bumps into someone else he hasn’t seen lately. It’s pretty chill. Never been into that tension breeds art approach. But we are perfectionists, and quite demanding of ourselves.



Above: Charge of the Light Brigade. Photo: Marc Koecher.



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

DVD: *For Colored Girls* (2010).

Based on Ntozake Shange's play, *For Colored Girls Who Have Considered Suicide When the Rainbow is Enuf*.

Director: Tyler Perry.

Cast: Janet Jackson, Thandie Newton, Whoopi Goldberg, Phylicia Rashad, Anika Noni Rose, Loretta Devine, Kimberly Elise, Kerry Washington.

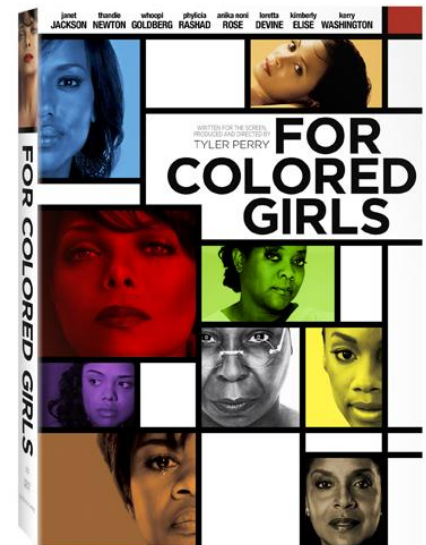
Black Women Negotiating Social Justice for Women at Large

Whoopi Goldberg plays a bitter religious cult follower who worships a god called Elnohim, a name that's possibly a twisting of the Old Testament name "Elohim" to make a male-less god (El + no + him = a god without a him). This woman has been so profoundly betrayed by men that it's understandable she should seek a universe with an emasculated god. Nonetheless she refers to this god as a he, rather than seeking a female deity. Apparently she has trust issues there as well.

This is not a film about the plight of African-Americans; it's a film about women. The fact that these women are black just throws their problems into sharper relief. As postmodern feminists have long acknowledged, being an ethnic minority, having a physical or mental handicap, or being gay just compounds the essential difficulty of being a woman in a patriarchal world.

Another good reason for these being African-American characters is that these words must be spoken, and they are best spoken by black women. Women of all groups, classes, ethnic groups, and capabilities suffer abuse, betrayal, poverty, scorn, double standards, and emotional blackmail. Watching the phenomenal acting of the women in *For Colored Girls* as their characters battle for balance and survival is an exploration our culture requires. Those critics who have accused this film of being melodramatic have missed the point: the warmth, flamboyance, and outspokenness of African-American women are the ideal conduit for a discussion on the experience of female suffering and the way out of it.

In *For Colored Girls*, our hearts are broken when we witness the wondrousness of women and girls whose beauty, magical grace, and wit and charm are not theirs at all, and can be stolen from them at any moment. Those who seem so glamorous in public go home to atrocious conditions or to await some horror about which the world knows nothing and from which it can't seem to deliver them.



In the warm, honey-gold interiors the parade of archetypes—the wise crone, the saintly, battered wife, the debutante, the vamp, the priestess, the career woman—at first dance solo down the street, but eventually they all join together. And although at first the characters don't seem to be related, one short vignette branches from the last and then branches into yet a new one as we are led through the plot like mules through a labyrinth. Eventually the archetypes interact, conflict with each other, and then support one other. As in Vonnegut, there is a chain of contempt: this one despises that one, but is in turn despised by another, who is despised by yet another. Ants have lesser ants that bite 'em. But only for a season.

The real originality in this film (as in the play that spawned it) is the fact that it uses poetic passages the way opera uses songs: the plot will be unfolding in all its gritty realism when suddenly a character will express her pain in a spoken poem. The transitions are seamless, with the characters like singers in a musical who break into song to describe falling in love. It really is a fine artistic achievement, creating a significant aesthetic experience.

For Colored Girls manifests nine of The Mindful Bard's criteria for films well worth seeing: 1) it harmoniously unites art with social conscience, saving me from both seclusion in an ivory tower and slavery to someone else's political agenda; 2) it is about attainment of the true self; 3) it inspires an awareness of the sanctity of creation; 4) it displays an engagement with and compassionate response to suffering; 5) it makes me want to be a better artist; 6) it gives me tools enabling me to respond with compassion and efficacy to the suffering around me; 7) it renews my enthusiasm for positive social action; 8) it is authentic, original, and delightful; and 9) it makes me appreciate that life is a complex and rare phenomenon, making living a unique opportunity.

From the film:

"Being colored is a metaphysical dilemma I haven't conquered yet."

"There's too much life wrapped up in your voice. You gotta get up from here."



DID YOU KNOW? Bilingual Chat

Learning a new language can be difficult, particularly if you're in a distance learning setting or picking it up on your own. Even the best self-study programs lack the immersion aspect and the opportunity to casually converse in that language, thus practicing speaking and listening fluency.

Bilingual Chat, a brand new initiative, is a social network created to fulfill that need. Accounts are free, and users can join forums, log into open chat rooms, and make one-on-one connections for additional conversational practice. You can also use a basic e-translator or set up instant messaging or video chats.

Not learning a language, but interested in international cultures? Bilingual Chat also allows you to "help others with their English, learn about foreign countries, and get some valuable travel advice."

Whether you're a student struggling through first-year German, a manager looking to upgrade her French skills, or a traveller seeking to learn the basics of Japanese language and culture, Bilingual Chat may help you further your linguistic goals.



From Where I Sit

Hazel Anaka

Celebrate

Sunday, May 8 is Mother's Day. What you do to honour your mother or what your kids do to honour you largely depends on where in life you are. Some mothers will get a macaroni necklace, a spindly green plant in a Styrofoam cup, and a wobbly handwritten, crayon-illustrated card. Most of us still have the yarn-wrapped jar ring hot dish pad lovingly done in elementary art class. Mom will beam, tear up, and hug her little kid. This is the first inkling she has that this little person can put someone else first.

Later, mothers may get a store-bought gift. How flashy or useful it is may depend on whether dad slipped a few bucks toward the cause or whether the purchase was strictly piggy bank financed. All of us have had to look beyond the useless or the kitschy to understand that indeed it is the thought that counts. (Bulletin: we're less forgiving if dad did the shopping. When will some men learn? There was a time that every piece of jewellery Roy bought me had a leaf or flower motif. Enough already!)

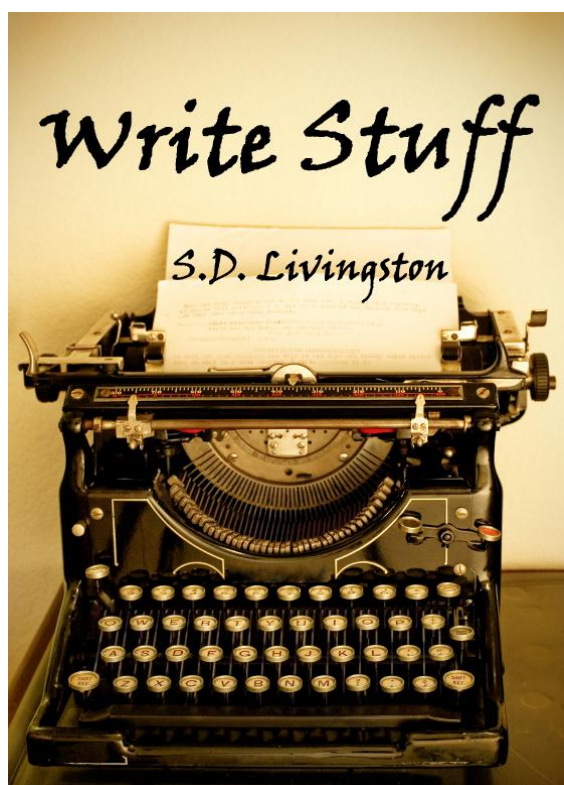
As the child (and child's budget) grows and matures, the quality of the gifts improves. But what we *really* love is being remembered. We're touched when husbands and kids have been paying attention, when they put two and two together. They see that some of us would rather get a book than a kitchen appliance. They understand that a meal, any meal we haven't had to prepare, is a gift. Concert tickets, a pedicure, and things we hesitate to buy ourselves are always appreciated.

After years of buying gifts, they realize that a gift card or certificate is always a good choice. Not that we're hard to please or anything, you understand . . . but these gifts offer possibilities. They can pay for the next haircut, the next bestseller, the next whatever. The outing to buy that item is a gift in itself. Cynics may say that it is the only thing to give to someone who has everything.

So this year, whether it's a bouquet or a book, a meal or a manicure, a gift card or a macaroni necklace, each of us needs to remember that it is the process. It's the remembering, the sentiments handwritten or pre-printed in the card, and the act of thinking, choosing, and buying. But more importantly, it's the other 364 days a year. It's acknowledging that these women are the matriarchs of the family and the glue that holds it all together.

Just ask someone like me, someone who has a mother and is a mother. And a grandmother. The thread that connects my mom, me, and my daughter-in-law is the love and effort we each put into our most important job. Did we each make mistakes? You betcha. Was the motivation ever less than loving? No way.

Celebrating this first and most important relationship is the real reason for the day, from where I sit.



Friday Finds

Not long ago, I compared the recent surge in self-publishing to the California Gold Rush. It's exciting and has loads of potential, but also involves wading through mountains of slush to strike pay dirt. So it's well worth sharing when a glimmer of literary gold shines out of the morass, and Friday Finds will introduce you to some self-published gems. First up is a clever historical mystery by P.B. Ryan, *Still Life with Murder*.

Still Life with Murder launches Ryan's mystery series featuring Boston governess Nell Sweeney and former surgeon Will Hewitt, a man with a haunted past and an opium habit. To be absolutely fair, this title was first published by Berkley Prime Crime, but Ryan has independently released the series as e-books. I stumbled across this title on indie site [Smashwords](#) and was instantly hooked.

In the autumn of 1864, Nell has escaped poverty and violence to become a doctor's assistant. Ryan pulls the reader in with rich description as Nell and the doctor rush to deliver a baby. With a storm brewing, their coachman is a "smear of black

hunched over the reins" through foggy windows.

More impressive, though, is what the story lacks: the self-conscious dialogue and flouncing petticoats that plague most historical novels, no matter what their genre. Instead, Ryan gives Nell a refreshing maturity and emotional depth. This is a young woman who's seen life's seedier depths. She's had lovers, lost family, and her reactions throughout the book reflect that and make her character believable—she's no caricature of the swooning Victorian miss thrust into a murder investigation.

When society matron Viola Hewitt offers Nell a place in the Hewitts' wealthy Boston household, Nell's quick to accept. But the contentment of her new life is disturbed when reports of the Hewitts' son, William, surface. A respected army surgeon, Will's been dead for four years, a casualty of the Civil War. Until he shows up in a Boston prison, accused of a savage murder.

Family secrets pit Viola against her husband, August, in deciding Will's fate. When Nell agrees to help, she finds herself drawn back into the sordid world she thought she'd escaped. The book also highlights an interesting, if little-known, facet of US history: [Andersonville](#), a notorious Confederate prison camp where some 13,000 Union prisoners died of "malnutrition, exposure, and disease" during just 15 months of operation.

Three elements of the book surprised me, two of them positive. First was the author's knack for believable dialogue. Historical settings often seem like set pieces, with characters sounding historically accurate but stilted. Ryan neatly avoids that pitfall, though, and sprinkles Victorian-era language sparingly through the book. As a result, Nell and the others speak with an engaging realism.

The other pleasant surprise was that several plot twists caught me off guard. "You may figure out "whodunit" halfway through the book, but *Still Life with Murder* is one of the few mysteries I've read that kept me guessing.

The only quibble—and it’s a fairly small one—is that there were more editing errors than expected, especially since Ryan thanks her editor in the acknowledgements. Perhaps that’s a holdover from the paper edition of the book, but one more editorial pass would have eliminated the handful of stray commas (“It’s, Cyril Greaves . . .”) and missing words (“from sound of . . .”) that tend to be the bane of indie books.

In all, though, I found *Still Life with Murder* a great read with an intriguing plot and highly believable characters—especially Nell and Will. I’ll definitely be heading back to Victorian Boston to catch up with them in the rest of the series.

You can check out P.B. Ryan’s [website](#) to find out more about this title and others.

CLICK OF THE WRIST: Flower, Bloom and Grow

April showers may bring May flowers, and the beautiful gardens of the world are bursting into bloom. But for the rest of us, nature has a floral paradise of its own: beautiful wildflowers are only a walk in the park away. This week’s links take us on a tour of the flora waiting for us in the great outdoors.

Edible Jungle

Are you trying to determine whether that weed in your backyard is safe to eat? Or attempting to start a medicinal herb garden? Do you want to grow an edible landscape? This edible/medicinal plant database, from research organization Plants For A Future, is a valuable resource.

Pollination Observation

Sure, pollen can give you the sneezes or watery eyes, and insects can be great pests. But the two of them work together to ensure plant pollination, a process that is vital to a healthy ecosystem. To aid scientists in studying pollination further, conservation organization Seeds of Diversity has instituted a program allowing casual observers to participate in data collection. Click the link to learn more about how to become a Pollinator Observer and/or to download an Observer’s Manual.

Wild Backyard

Native plant gardens—those using plants native to one’s region—are growing in popularity as more and more people recognize the need to support our local ecosystems. Environmental organization Evergreen has fantastic guides for starting, selecting plants for, and maintaining, a native plant garden in your own backyard.

Show Your ID

For full colour field guides to local wildflowers and plants, there’s always the library or the bookstore. Or, if you live in northeastern or north-central Canada, you could check out this online, interactive field guide. Simply run searches based on the characteristics of the flower in question to figure out just what you’re viewing. Enthusiasts in western Canada, specifically BC, might visit the University of British Columbia’s E-Flora BC [site](#) as a local alternative.



INTERNATIONAL NEWS DESK



At Home: No Car, No Problem

No car? Don't worry: car-sharing services have been slowly and steadily increasing in popularity in cities around the world. And if you live in Montreal, Quebec, you may be able to borrow a car if a new initiative being proposed to the city takes off.

As the CBC [reports](#), local company Communauto is working with city officials in the hopes of implementing a car-sharing service that operates via "pay-by-the-minute car rentals." The initiative would "reduce the number of private vehicles on the road."

Communauto is modelling its service on the already-successful local bike-sharing system, Bixi, and on global car-sharing system Car2Go, which has spread in Europe, the United States, and most recently Canada, where it will begin operating a 225-car fleet in Vancouver next month.

Communauto customers would have access to 400 vehicles "spread around locations . . . downtown," and would pay approximately 50 cents per minute (\$14 per hour) for their use. Vehicles could be located through a smart phone app, and reservations wouldn't be required.

Communauto is still working out other details, like those pertaining to insurance, and is still waiting for the city's approval.

Around the World: So You Can Think You Can Dance (and Steal)

YouTube: the often absurd but always entertaining result of people with too much technology and too much time on their hands. While some YouTube video clips spawn fame and even careers for their makers (think singers Justin Bieber and, more recently, Rebecca Black), others create notoriety and significant embarrassment (Star Wars kid, anyone?). For one wannabe dancer, a YouTube dance clip did much more: fingered him for theft.

As *The Boston Globe* [reports](#), a 21-year-old thief used the laptop he stole to make audition clips for a reality show. Those videos might never have become a YouTube sensation, however, if the laptop's owner—university student Mark Bao—hadn't remembered that all the files on his computer were backed up by a remote backup service.

Bao logged into the backup service, perusing the files to try to determine the thief's identity. He found video clips of the thief dancing to rap music, and chatted about his discovery to his "10,000 Twitter followers . . . [who] egged him on," encouraging him to post the video on YouTube.

The dancing was apparently so embarrassing that when the clip went viral, the thief contacted Bao, "begging him to take the video down."

The YouTube clip is still up, and the dancer is being arraigned on theft charges.

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

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