

THE VOICE

MAGAZINE

Vol 19 Iss 37 2011-09-30

Why Can't I Stop Yawning?

The sleep primer

Mind of an Artist

Avant-garde, exposed

Tell Me the Odds

The number of you

*Plus:
Write Stuff
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.



OUT OF THE BOX

Christina M. Frey



One in a (Lot More Than a) Million

We're all unique, we're all special. How many times have we heard that—and brushed it off? After all, we've had the line fed to us since childhood: teachers, parents, partners, friends, and self-help gurus have all underscored our uniqueness. After a while it loses its charm.

If everyone is so unique and special, how does that make us any different? Does “one in a million” really have any meaning to a grown—and perhaps cynical—adult?

Shockingly, yes—and there's science to back it up.

Although many like to keep science and spirituality in separate spheres, each can enlighten the other. A fascinating recent [blog post](#) uses mathematics to cross the spirituality line in a way that shook me to my core.

“What are the chances you would be born?” writer and life coach Ali Binazir wrote. Traditional Buddhist thought says that the likelihood of our existence is comparable to the likelihood of a single turtle in the ocean surfacing and putting its head through a single life preserver floating in the ocean. Binazir compared this with a scientist's claim he'd heard. These, he calculated, put the probability of me being me at 1 in 400 to 700 trillion.

That's a pretty amazing claim—and interesting that both numbers are fairly similar. But then Binazir proceeds to verify the math. Because his calculations are pretty simple (thankfully), he doesn't factor in many of the twists and turns of fate that lead to one person meeting another. But he assigns reasonable probabilities of your parents meeting and hitting it off, and of your mother becoming pregnant. Oh, and the probability of it being the *exact same sperm and egg that met*, because your DNA could have wound up different just by a matter of chance.

That's all mind-boggling enough. But then, Binazir extends the same thought backward throughout the generations. After all, for your parents to make you specifically, they had to inherit particular traits from *their* parents, and so on.

And that's just talking about human reproduction. As several commenters mentioned, what about going back even further, to prehistoric days? Binazir doesn't do that—for simplicity's sake—but it's fascinating to think back to times when intelligence or deliberate decisions didn't factor in, when weather and climate and the bigger predator and good genes all worked together to decide who'd survive and who wouldn't.

According to one writer, the odds that you would have come into existence as you are now are 1 in $10^{2,685,000}$. How's that for perspective?

Nor does the article factor in all the minute twists and turns your life could have taken had there been a few tweaks to your story (the film *Mr. Nobody* comes to mind).

So based on the calculations Binazir does give, what are the odds you ended up *you*? Here's the shocking truth: the probability of your existence "[is] the probability of 2 million people getting together – about the population of San Diego – each to play a game of dice with *trillion-sided dice*. They each roll the dice – and they all come up the exact same number."

That's incomprehensible. Astronomical. And it makes the head spin: *Why did I end up being me?*

Our very existence is a miracle—whether of chance, fate, nature, or a higher power. Life's a gift. Let's use it well.

CLICK OF THE WRIST

How's That for a Harvest?

Harvest time is in full swing, and stores and farmer's markets are overflowing with the bounty. We're used to our produce looking a certain way. But many crops are grown all over the world in varieties that appear quite different than what we're used to. These links introduce some unique varieties of vegetables—and give tips on how to get your own heirloom garden going!

A Potato by Any Other Name

Yellow, red, even blue potatoes: you've seen them all, right? Not necessarily. Check out this *National Geographic* gallery of potato species you've never even heard of. Many of them are native to the Andes, the area in which the potato originated. It's not just appearances, either—the varieties are so different nutrition-wise that you could exist solely on a diet of potatoes!

Tomatoes of Yore

Not all tomatoes are red and round—but mix them together and you've got a very unique salad. These photos, from TLC's cooking guide, show various types of heirloom tomatoes (and how they look on the serving platter!).

Heirloom Gardening

Heirloom gardening—propagating seeds that have been passed down throughout the generations—is the latest trend among green gardeners and foodies. These vegetables may look weird compared to what we're used to, but growing and using heirloom vegetables can bypass concerns about hybridization and genetic modification. The practice also keeps a variety of genetic strains in existence, something that's important to preserving the world food supply.



HEALTH MATTERS

Katie D'Souza



Time for Bed

Sleep: we all crave it. And yet it's something that many of us have difficulty getting, or at least getting well. This article explores the mystery of sleep, including why it's so important for health, how to recognize the warning signs of insomnia, and how to maximize our sleep experience.

Why Sleep?

Good sleep is synonymous with good health. Why? It's the body's prime time for rejuvenation and repair. Throughout the day, our bodies undergo "wear and tear" on a cellular level; sleep helps combat this because when we're at rest, our bodies can finally divert their focus and deal with issues inside. Healthy sleep habits also maintain good cardiovascular health, reducing inflammatory markers that can predispose us to stroke and early cardiac events. Additionally, when we're stressed, sleep can actually help reduce those stress levels by reducing cortisol.

According to Harvard Medical School's Sleep Division, lack of sleep causes a variety of negative symptoms, including irritability, mood swings, and a feeling of being "on edge." Additionally, those with insufficient sleep can have hampered judgment and learning ability, with a "foggy" brain sensation and reduced mental alertness (hence the road safety sign, "Fatigue Kills").

Do You Have Insomnia?

Most of us have trouble nodding off at least some of the time, but how good is your sleep generally? The checklist below is a basic guideline to determining whether you are getting good quality sleep.

- Do I need sleeping medications to help me fall or stay asleep?
- Do I fall asleep easily, or do I lie awake, waiting for sleep to come?
- Do I sleep the night through, or do I wake multiple times?
- Do I have nightmares or dream-disturbed sleep?
- When I wake, do I feel rested?
- During the day, do I have episodes of sleepiness or fall asleep easily (in the car, at my desk)?
- Do I feel more irritable, experience more moodiness, or get more emotional than my norm?

One in seven Canadians suffers from sleep issues. Are you among them? Read through the checklist at left and see how your sleep experience adds up.

If you've resonated with some of the questions above, you're not alone. Millions of North Americans report sleep problems, and over 69 per cent of North American children don't get enough sleep.

Why does it occur?

Insomnia can occur for a host of reasons. Stress is a major sleep killer; even if you nod off, your mind tosses and turns, resulting in disturbed sensations during would-be rest time. (The paradox is that if you can actually get to sleep while under stress, sleep can lower your stress hormone levels).

Often, sleep quality can decrease at mid-life, especially for post-menopausal women. Jet lag and shift work also affect healthy sleep patterns.

What can I do?

No need to call the Sandman; there are some things you can do on your own to help improve your sleep quality. First, it's important to check out your "sleep hygiene," or your pre-sleep habits and your going-to-sleep habits. A healthy sleep hygiene goes a long way toward encouraging a deeper, more restful (and therefore more productive) sleep. The following can maximize your sleep experience:

- Ensure that your bedtime routine is relaxing. Don't fall asleep watching TV, and never exercise before bed. Focus on something quiet, like reading, meditation, or listening to calming music.
- Drink warm, non-caffeinated herbal tea; it can help you put your brain and body in rest mode after a long day. But beware of drinking too many liquids before bed, or you may be interrupted during the night.
- Take a warm bath to help you relax—it can also help prevent nighttime muscle spasms or cramps.
- When you're ready to fall asleep, turn out all the lights and close the drapes to create a darkened environment. Light while you're sleeping, even if it's only from a small nightlight, can interfere with your brain's production of melatonin, a neurohormone that keeps you asleep.
- As you lie in bed, focus on mentally and physically relaxing every muscle and every nerve in your body. Don't give up too soon; it takes two minutes of conscious body relaxation to bring the brain into an alpha-wave (read: relaxed) state.



- If you do wake at night, don't get up and start doing chores or watching TV, even if you can't drop off right away. This will further disrupt your melatonin levels, creating a vicious circle.

Of course if your sleep doesn't improve with the above suggestions, you should talk to your natural health care provider to discuss more detailed sleep treatment (which may include the use of botanical medicine, acupuncture, homeopathy, or other lifestyle changes).

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.

IN CONVERSATION WITH . . .

Wanda Waterman

**Alysha Brillinger, Part II**

Alysha Brillinger is a Canadian singer-songwriter. She has crafted a unique personal musical style by combining blues and reggae to make funky, punchy, lovable tunes that express a sense of love, loss, and triumph. She recently finished the Tower of Song Tour, shared with Kristen Bussandri, in which she performed at venues in Montreal and Toronto. Alysha has just released her debut EP and is now at work on a full-length record. Read Part I of her interview [here](#).

Feeding the Muse

Alysha's upbringing exposed her to a wide spectrum of popular musical genres, but she singles out a few as particularly relevant catalysts. One notable album is *Led Zeppelin II* by Led Zeppelin. "I was given this CD by a neighbour in high school," she says. "It changed my life."

She's still seeking musical inspiration. On track for this week's listening? "Etta James, James Brown, Adele, Amy Winehouse, and Matisyahu."

A big fan of Joni Mitchell, Alysha identifies with other female singer-songwriters and loves to hear their stories. *Girls Like Us* by Sheila Weller, a favourite book, "profiles Joni Mitchell, Carole King, and Carly Simon and their journeys to becoming the prolific songwriters they are," Alysha says.

How to Really Care

Alysha is well aware of the power of music to soothe the savage breast. "I believe there's an energy in music, so I try and keep my music honest and positive," she says. "I think the world could use some more of that."

In spite of the very positive responses she's been receiving from audiences and critics alike, Alysha remains modest: "I've received several letters from people telling me that my song 'Better Soon' had helped them through a divorce or a serious bout of depression, and I was really caught off guard because until then I didn't realize the potency of anything I'd created."

"We are all artists in a way—every action, word, and song has an impact on the world, and we can design and craft that impact."

Alysha Brillinger in an interview with Wanda Waterman

It was gratifying to think that she was now able to provide listeners with the very benefits that music had long been granting to her. "I've had songs that have gotten me through breakups and trying times, but never fully imagined my music could do the same for someone else," Alysha says.

On Spirituality

Alysha grew up in a very secular household that wasn't bound to any religious practices or beliefs. In her case this led to an attraction to spirituality and to music's mystical quality, and the songs she writes speak to our society's need for gatherings, fellowship, and ritual.

"There wasn't even an ounce of spirituality in my household, actually," she says. "I've always felt a connection to something higher, whether or not it has a name. In an increasingly secular society, I think music and concerts function as the societal and community gathering we would otherwise have had in a church. This is why the ritual of playing music for me is very spiritual and very cathartic."

What's Next?

Currently, Alysha's producing a music video and has written a song that might be featured on the album of an NBC's *The Voice* runner-up. She's also geared up for more touring this fall and hopes to be doing shows in Halifax as well as the United Kingdom.

"CBC radio is playing my music," Alysha says. "I'm really happy that people have been hearing more of it across our amazing country!"

DID YOU KNOW?

Access to Students with Disabilities (ASD)



Are you an Athabasca University student who's struggling with an educational or physical challenge, physical or psychological condition, or permanent or temporary injury or illness that's affecting your ability to complete your studies? You may be eligible for special support services from AU's ASD.

Based on the Learning Assistance Centres or Offices of Service to Students with Disabilities you'll find on most bricks and mortar campuses, ASD "finds alternative ways to deliver similar services to students . . . including using innovative strategies and cutting edge technologies."

Because ASD acknowledges that each student's situation is affected by geographic location and the resources available, it involves the student in "[finding] a mutually satisfactory resolution to the assessed support service or accommodation requirement." Possibilities include alternative learning formats, assisted technology, examination accommodations, and other learning support services.

To apply for assistance, you'll need to fit the eligibility criteria and submit the required paperwork. For further details, click [here](#).

For more information on ASD and how it can help you reach your academic goals, visit the ASD [website](#).



From Where I Sit

Hazel Anaka

Wish I Was an Early Adopter

Since finally committing to (and following through on) writing a book, my life has been a blur—not of parties and adulation, but of hard, hard work. In this new world, writing and publishing the book is only the first and arguably the easiest of many steps.

A *real* writer is chomping at the bit and already at work on the next project. She's intent on applying the hard-won lessons from the previous work and getting a new cast of characters onto the page.

But can she simply write? No. Along with the challenge of 1,000 words or umpteen pages per day, she is faced with the uphill battle of being the marketer of the newly published book. The size of the task depends, these days, on the degree of her savvy in the tech and social media universe.

For someone who didn't teethe on computers, my learning curve has been monumental. And ongoing. And simultaneously frustrating and satisfying. Just when I think, *Yes, I do believe I've got it*, the target moves, disappears, or is updated. While I can acknowledge I've come a long way, baby, it hasn't been easy or pretty.

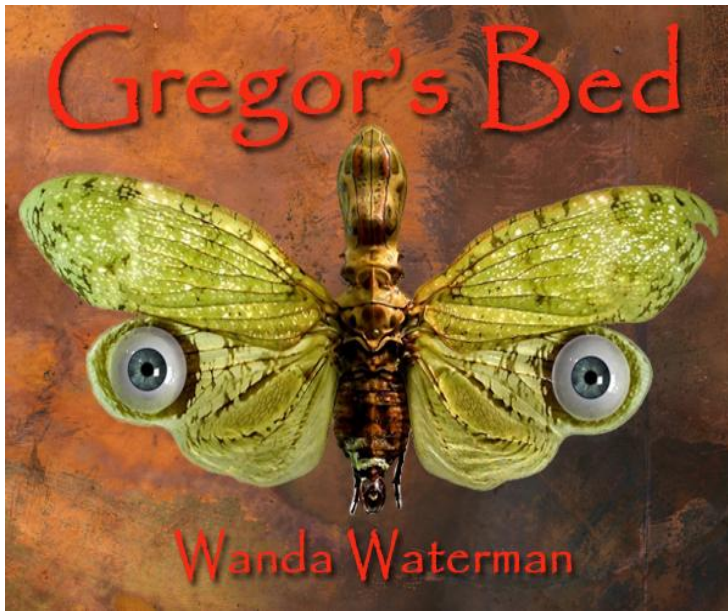
Conventional wisdom says that no matter what you are attempting to sell, you need a platform. That platform boils down to who knows you and is likely to buy whatever it is you're flogging. These days platforms are built through Twitter, Facebook, blogging, websites, and the like. The goal is to lay down tracks that lead back to you.

Not only do you have to learn how to do all these things, you need to give value. Anything blatantly hard-shell takes on the scent of desperation and is soon dismissed as spam. Any blog that is intermittent loses its lustre—not to mention its search engine optimization. With billions of things (real and virtual) clamouring for each nanosecond of our attention, anything that doesn't amuse or inform us is a bloody waste of time.

So in the last few weeks and months, I've learned to Tweet—even though I've mocked it in the past. (Never say never.) Could I be doing it better, more frequently, and using more hashtags? Without a doubt.

I've started a blog-type website through WordPress and am still learning the how-to and potential of the dashboard. That, too, is a work in progress. I needed to keep trying different themes until I found one that responded to my clumsy efforts. Do I blog enough? No. Are the entries penetratingly brilliant when I do? Depends on the audience I guess, but here, too, I have a long way to go. I still haven't caved and started a Facebook page, but who knows?

So between reading RSS feeds, Tweeting, blogging, and updating the website, just when am I supposed to write? And I still haven't tried joining a forum or guest blogging or adding comments or, or, or . . . Guess it's too late to be an early adopter, from where I sit.



Recent Discoveries From the Realm of the Experimental and Avant-Garde

What is the Avant-Garde and Why Does it Matter? Part I

"There is a certain kind of person who is so dominated by the desire to be loved for himself alone that he has constantly to test those around him by tiresome behavior; what he says and does must be admired, not because it is intrinsically admirable, but because it is his remark, his act. Does not this explain a good deal of avant-garde art?"

W.H. Auden

"Avant-garde is French for bullshit."

John Lennon

Actually "avant-garde" is French for whatever's out in front, but sometimes that's exactly where the bullshit is.

Although it literally means vanguard, in general the term is applied to the arts, where it's used to describe the experimental (John Cage), the alternative (Frank Zappa), the underground (*Finnegans Wake* and *Mrs Dalloway*), the eccentric (Klaus Nomi), and the new (steampunk). Many works created years ago are far more avant-garde than what is being created today, so it really isn't about what's hip and current. Occasionally the avant-garde does spring into notoriety (e.g., Mondrian-influenced mod clothing or beatnik poetry), but avant-garde is less about the box's tinsel than about the seriousness of its contents. Philip Glass, for example, is avant-garde; Lady Gaga is not.

It's a bit of a contradiction to ask why the avant-garde matters at all. Part of the character of much of avant-garde art is that it's firmly intended *not* to matter, *not* to be meaningful, and *not* to carry a message.

But the medium is the message, as McLuhan said. Simply creating something and showing it to people is communication, even though it might not be possible to state the message in formal prose.

There's always a message, even when that message might be simply that you don't like sending messages. Even the most commercial and mindless movies and music, whose enduring worth lies only in their

"Many works created years ago are far more avant-garde than what is being created today, so it really isn't about what's hip and current . . . Philip Glass, for example, is avant-garde; Lady Gaga is not."

potential to one day be seen as quaint or camp, are telling us something about how we ought to be living.

In avant-garde art, “what can be said of each work of art can also be said of the movement as a whole, each new piece either echoing previous works or adding something new to the dialogue.”

The avant-garde differs from this only in that the messages tend be much more disturbing. And more enlightening.

True to most such movements, what can be said of each work of art can also be said of the movement as a whole, each new piece either echoing previous works or adding something new to the dialogue.

Since my teen years I’ve had an attachment to the avant-garde that sometimes, to my surprise, enraged my more conservative friends. I remember a university pal who would insist on accompanying me to art galleries and concerts, only to work herself into a pique of ire at whatever was on display.

In response to Paul Klee: *How can you call this art?* In response to a concert of Scriabin piano works: *She’s just banging on the keys!* In response to *La Strada*: *What the hell is THAT?*

I was amazed that my artistic tastes could have provoked actual shock and rage—she acted like I’d been cannibalizing babies. I began to understand the riots provoked by Stravinsky’s *Rite of Spring* and the first exhibitions of impressionist paintings. And I began to wonder if this kind of reaction, which turns out to have been quite common for as long as art has been around, might in itself be evidence of the avant-garde’s value to culture at large.

In my experience, the avant-garde is densely packed with messages. Its distinguishing feature is not recalcitrance, but rather a lack of superficial messages. You could say, for example, that *Un Chien Andalou* is telling us that life is a network of anxiety-provoking conflicts, or of Steve Reich’s music that the world outside the box is bathed in a sweet, magical excitement. But it’s much better to let the art do the talking, and it’s only going to talk to you if you really listen.

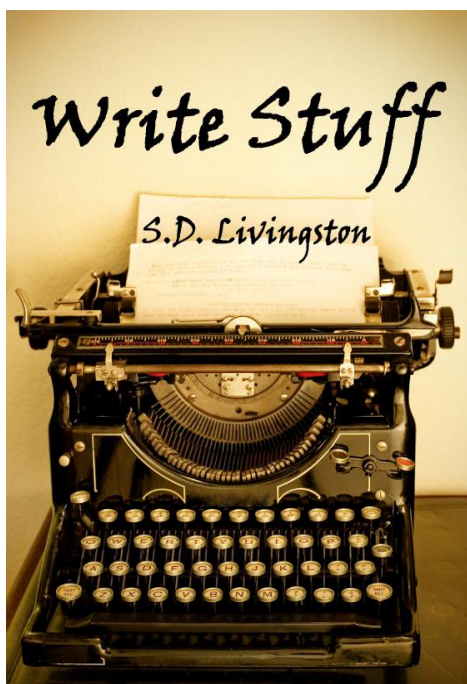
(To be continued . . .)



How Do You Like Your Voice?

It’s no secret that the patterns of media consumption have changed drastically over the past couple of years—and that they’re going to keep evolving with new technological breakthroughs. We at *The Voice* want to ensure that we’re continuing to meet your needs, and we need your help.

How would you prefer to read *The Voice Magazine*? Do you like downloading the PDF, or does reading articles online suit your browsing needs better? Do you prefer flipping through articles on a smart phone, e-reader, or other mobile device? Let us know; we’re listening!



A Critical Success

I have a confession to make. I recently read a P.D. James novel and hated it. Okay, maybe not hated. But every time I recall the experience, every time I'm tempted by the thick lure of a James paperback, the dull grey memory of *Death in Holy Orders* washes over me—along with a sense of being duped by the rave reviews that convinced me to buy it. And now I can't help wondering: how many bestsellers have been created by critics, not writers?

Historically, readers relied on the well-respected opinions of professional reviewers—those voices on high that opined from places like *The Saturday Evening Post* or *The New Yorker*, and that could make (or break) a book's chances. We've got book bloggers, Goodreads, and Amazon now, but professional reviews still carry a lot of weight.

Not only are they splashed across covers and front matter, they also influence buying decisions at libraries. In fact, one public librarian mentioned them twice in a [guest blog](#) at Writer Beware. Along with admitting that libraries base a “majority . . . of selections” on the critics' reviews, she notes that bad reviews can quickly consign a book to your local library's Neverland.

So as I browsed the airport bookstore that day, it's no surprise that I was hooked by the rave reviews in James's book. “P.D. James is a great writer at the very top of her art,” wrote the *Roanoke Times* reviewer. “James's characters . . . are so deliciously sketched out,” said *Entertainment Weekly*. Equally glowing praise came from *The New York Times Book Review*.

But halfway through the long, dull plod of *Holy Orders*, I began to wonder if those professional reviewers were talking about the same book. It wasn't the first time, either. After seeing high praise for Stieg Larsson's trilogy, including *The Washington Post* calling it “[a modern masterpiece](#),” I attempted them myself—but even my best efforts weren't enough to slog through any of the instalments to the end.

Trouble is, I'd already become part of the machinery that drives up book sales and propels writers onto bestseller lists, even though I found those books so dreary they put me to sleep. Which got me doing the math. How many book clubs, libraries, and individual readers have launched a book up the charts based on what the pros say, only to dislike it? Indeed, how many bestsellers have achieved that status because readers truly consider them “best,” instead of simply because they sold based on popular influence?



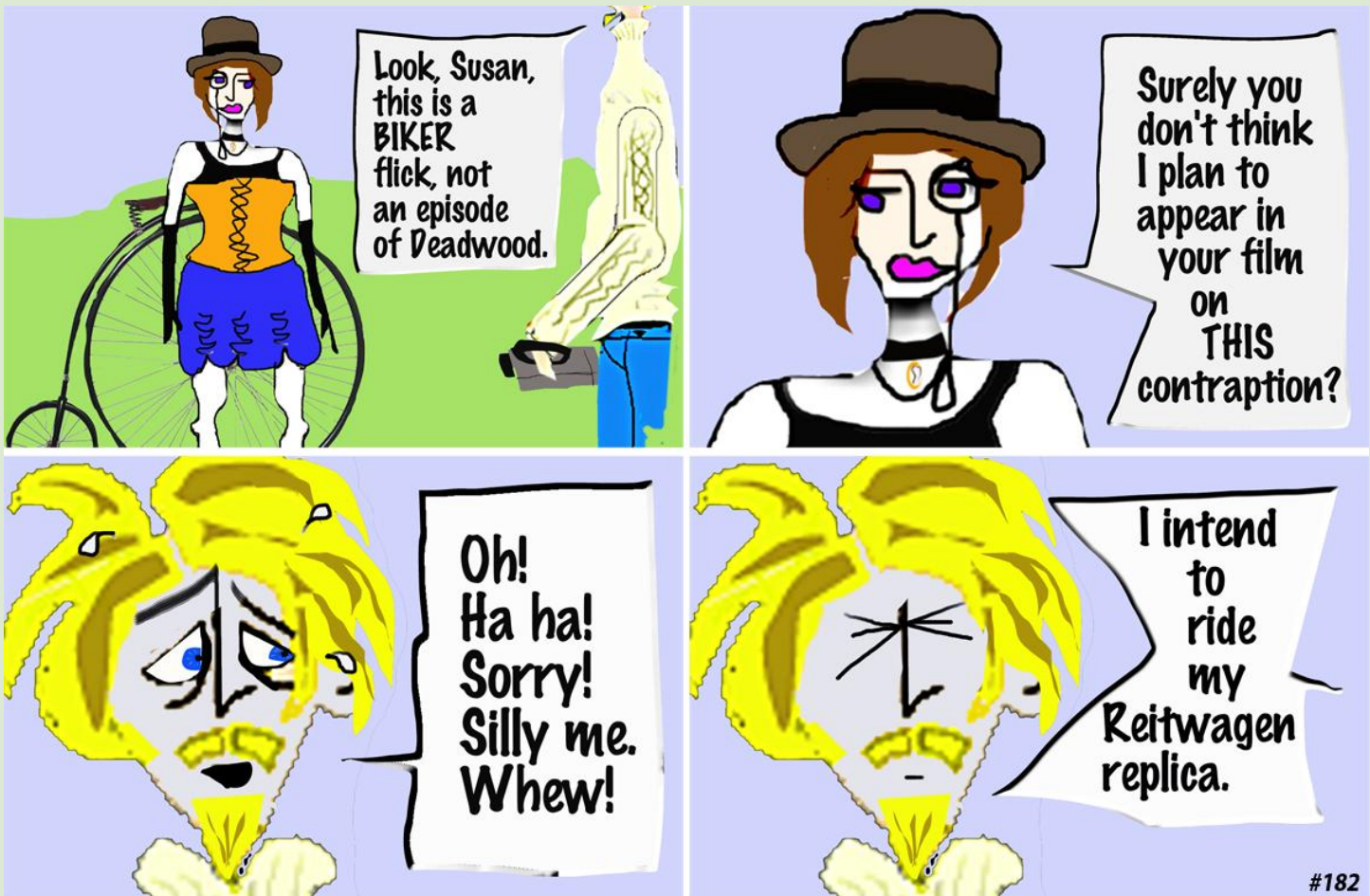
It's impossible to know, of course, since most readers won't take the time or trouble to return a book they didn't like. And publishers certainly don't make that data public.

It seems to me, though, that as traditional publishing mechanisms are slowly dismantled, it's far from being a death knell for literature. Readers and writers are more involved in the publishing process than ever before, from self-publishing to online reviews. As those alternative review sources grow (and as measures are put in place to stop people from rigging the system), it could spell a major shift in which titles hit the bestseller lists.

Coincidentally, P.D. James has an intriguing new project set for release this fall—*Death Comes to Pemberley*, a crime novel that puts the characters of *Pride and Prejudice* smack in the middle of a whodunit. It's got loads of promise: a murder mystery, period drama, familiar characters. So much promise, in fact, that I'm tempted to give Phyllis Dorothy James White another try—no matter what the critics say.

CHRONICLES OF CRUISCIN LAN

Wanda Waterman



AUSU UPDATE: SEPTEMBER 2011

Bethany Tynes, President



Update on AUSU awards program

AUSU has long had a student awards program to recognize outstanding students and assist those in need. Over the course of the last couple years, though, we've sought to revamp and revise our awards portfolio to improve existing awards and add new ones! We now have a wide array of bursaries to support students in need (including our popular computer and travel bursaries), scholarships to recognize students' outstanding academic achievements, and merit-based awards to recognize students' exceptional abilities and extra-curricular activities. Some awards are open to application at any time of year, while many have semi-annual deadlines. Our next major awards deadline is November 1st, so make sure

you [check our site](#) for more information and get your application in by then!

AUSU newsletter hitting mailboxes near you . . .

Every four to six months, AUSU publishes a printed newsletter full of helpful information for students and updates on what the Union is working on. The newsletter is drafted by AUSU's Executive Director with assistance from the AUSU Media Committee. Our most recent newsletter has been mailed out, and if it hasn't reached you yet, keep an eye on your mailbox, because it should arrive soon. If you just can't wait to see it, though, you can also [e-mail our office](#) for a PDF copy.

Watch for a new AUSU website coming soon!

Our website has served us long and well, but it is starting to show its age in some areas, so we're preparing to give our site a full facelift! We are currently just in the planning stages, but we're hopeful that within the next couple of months, we'll be able to announce a grand unveiling of our new site. We'll be making sure that our new and improved site is easier to navigate, with slick new menus and a contemporary look and feel. We want our site to provide dynamic content and updates so that it's a place that you, as an AU student, WANT to visit regularly! If

In this update:

- *Awards Program update*
- *AUSU newsletter on its way!*
- *Website changes ahead*
- *SmartDraw program news*

you have suggestions on content you'd like to see on our website, please get in touch with us to share your ideas.

Have you heard . . .

Have you heard that we still have some of our awesome 2011 AUSU Handbook/Planners available? Some of the information in these little books is priceless when it comes to helping AU students navigate the University and our services—but they're free for you, just for being an AUSU member! We even mail them right to your door. All you have to do is ask!

And have you heard about our SmartDraw program? We've been arranging for a license for our students to use this software for the last few years. It lets you create detailed charts and insert them into your assignments (even ones you submit as Word or PDF documents). The company has warned us, though, that there will be a massive price increase next year, so we want to know if our students feel that the software is a help to them, or if they'd rather have us look into other options. Get your copy today, and let us know what you think.

Get in touch with us

Have comments or questions about AUSU or anything in this column? Feel free to get in touch with AUSU President Bethany Tynes at president@ausu.org. You can also e-mail our office at ausu@ausu.org or call 1-800-788-9041 ext. 3413. We'd love to hear from you!

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INTERNATIONAL NEWS DESK



At Home: Texting Behind the Reins

Lawmakers are cracking down on distracted drivers. And while many provinces have laws in place banning texting behind the wheel or using a cellphone without a hands-free device, there are some situations where the law's application is questionable.

As the *Toronto Sun* [reports](#), drivers of calèches—the horse-drawn carriages seen on Montreal streets—have sparked a controversy by freely texting behind the reins. Texting while driving is illegal in Quebec.

The calèche drivers' association insists that the law shouldn't apply since "the horse can see where it's walking," the association's president told reporters. On the other hand, animal rights groups are concerned that inattentive drivers could cause injury to horses.

Normally, "[calèche] drivers are required by law to respect the rules of the road" and can be "ticketed for illegal parking," for example.

However, since calèches aren't considered to be road vehicles, police aren't applying the texting law to the drivers. They are "considered to be no different than cyclists or pedestrians," a police spokesperson told reporters.

Around the World: The Strength of Women

Women have suffered the label of "the weaker sex" for many years. However, recent studies are suggesting that the tables should be turned. In terms of immunity, women appear to have a strong advantage over men—and scientific research at the genetic level backs this up.

As the *Daily Telegraph* [reports](#), women are "genetically programmed to better resist infections and cancer, and also have a back-up system for fighting disease."

Researchers determined that microRNAs, which are "short strands of RNA encoded on the [X] chromosome," can threaten the immune system by "silencing immunity genes" on the X chromosome. Because men possess just one X chromosome, they have a higher risk of becoming ill after the microRNAs silence its immunity genes.

However, women have two X chromosomes; this means that "even when immunity genes are silenced on one the other can compensate."

Traditionally, women live longer than men, a phenomenon seen in the rest of the mammalian world as well. From an evolutionary perspective, scientists believe that women needed stronger immune defences since their survival was more crucial to "the survival of the species."

CLASSIFIEDS

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The Ishayas' Ascension provides a series of simple and effective procedures to move our awareness from habitual Victim Consciousness to Enlightenment. Based in Praise, Gratitude, Love and Compassion, the practice is extremely easy, all but effortless and completely natural. Ascension can be practiced with the eyes open throughout the day and with eyes closed as a meditation.

A free introductory lecture on Ascension will be at Padmanadi Restaurant; 10740-101 St. NW. Oct. 6, 7pm. The Ascension weekend course is in Edmonton, Oct. 7-9.

To register or for more information, contact Surya; 1-250-733-0610, surya.ishaya@gmail.com or visit theishayafoundation.org.

THE VOICE

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