

# THE VOICE

## MAGAZINE

Vol 19 Iss 38 2011-10-07

### Disconnect

So near, so far

### Hearing Voices

The future is bleak

### Seeing Red

The cranberry cure

*Plus:  
From Where I Sit  
Gregor's Bed  
and much more!*



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***The Voice  
Magazine***

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*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  
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# LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

We love to hear from you! Send your questions and  
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indicate if we may publish your letter.



## EDITORIAL

Christina M. Frey

**Hang Up!**

*Hang up!* It's a message that's taken off across North America lately. Distracted driving laws, like those recently introduced in Alberta, are cracking down on those who text behind the wheel—or chat without a hands-free device. Bloggers and life coaches are reminding us that failing to hang up when we pick up our kids from school sends a clear message about where our priorities lie. And governments are recommending that we reduce the time we spend with the phone glued to our ear—for the sake of our health.

There's considerable debate over the potential physical harm caused by cellphone use, but most health organizations recommend cutting down on phone time (or at least switching to a hands-free device) to minimize the risk. At the same time, these measures can reduce the chance we'll get distracted behind the wheel and cause injury to ourselves or others.

Minimizing physical danger is good. But it's not the whole story: danger to bodily health has nothing on the personal, emotional, and spiritual "illnesses" caused by the glued-to-the-smart phone phenomenon.

It's no secret that smart phones, tablets, and the like have changed the way we communicate. We're on call more often. We interact more, and more often—although it's usually short and sweet (and not particularly deep)—and with people far across the world.

Ironically, the one group the communications boom *hasn't* helped includes the people we see face-to-face each day.

Interacting with people—*really* interacting—often gets short shrift compared to the time we spend interacting in bits and spurts online or via text messaging. Phones and connectedness have invaded the home; we check Facebook before bed and respond to texts during dinner. We even prefer texting because it's neater, cleaner, and quicker than face time, or even than a phone call.

We're used to a fast-paced world, one in which we're reachable almost 24-7. But let's be honest: we're not always available. If I'm in the shower, odds are I'll miss a phone call and the caller will have to wait 10 minutes for me to respond. If I'm weight training, I probably won't stop to answer a text until I'm finished.

In the same vein, the caller or sender can *also* wait a few minutes if I'm spending time, real, focused time, with family or friends. It's logical. It's necessary. But it's not easy to do.

This Thanksgiving, let's try turning off the phones for an hour or two. Whether we're spending the holiday celebrating with family or friends, working, or volunteering, chances are we'll have the opportunity to put in some face time.

Who knows? We just might rediscover the gift of in-person interaction. And that's something we can all be thankful for.



## HEALTH MATTERS

Katie D'Souza



## Cranberries

When you think of Thanksgiving, what comes to mind is usually a food-filled holiday, complete with turkey or similarly festive fare. And don't forget the sides: mashed potatoes, in-season vegetables, and, of course, a dish of sparkling red cranberries. But did you know that cranberries are more than just a Thanksgiving dinner add-on? Cranberries boast of a wide variety of health benefits, including antioxidant, anti-aging, antibacterial, and anti-cancer properties.

The deep red colour of cranberries is indicative of their powerful antioxidant properties (this also applies to other dark-coloured fruits, like blueberries, blackberries, and cherries). Antioxidants are chemicals that reduce and prevent the cellular damage that occurs not only from outside agents (air pollution and chemicals in food and water, for example) but also from lifestyle (like stress and diet).

These antioxidant properties also mean that cranberries are anti-aging, since they increase the rate of cell repair and cell protection that's often slowed by age. The antioxidants in cranberries exert an influence on most body cells, but particularly those in the cardiovascular system (heart and blood vessels). This means added cardiovascular protection, and better functioning overall when cranberries are consumed on a regular basis.

Cranberries are also antibacterial. You've probably heard of using cranberries to help fight urinary tract infections. Why are they so effective? The red berries contain chemicals called proanthocyanidins, which stick to the walls of the urinary tract and bladder and prevent the attachment of infection-causing bacteria like *E. coli*. Of course, to help treat urinary tract infections you should use unsweetened cranberries; drink unsweetened cranberry juice, or consume the whole berries. The antibacterial properties start approximately two hours after your first dose, and can last up to ten hours.

Cranberries have also been shown to have anti-cancer benefits, potentially reducing the risk of prostate, colon, and lung cancer. For example, cranberries appear to trigger apoptosis of cancer cells because they contain components that lead to cancer cell death. Some preliminary research has also shown that cranberries exert an anti-cancer effect on breast cancer cells in vitro, but it's uncertain right now whether this would be the case in humans as well.

***Those cranberries do more than just look pretty on your plate; they're packed with antioxidant, anti-aging, antibacterial, and anti-cancer properties. But be sure to eat them raw for maximum benefit!***

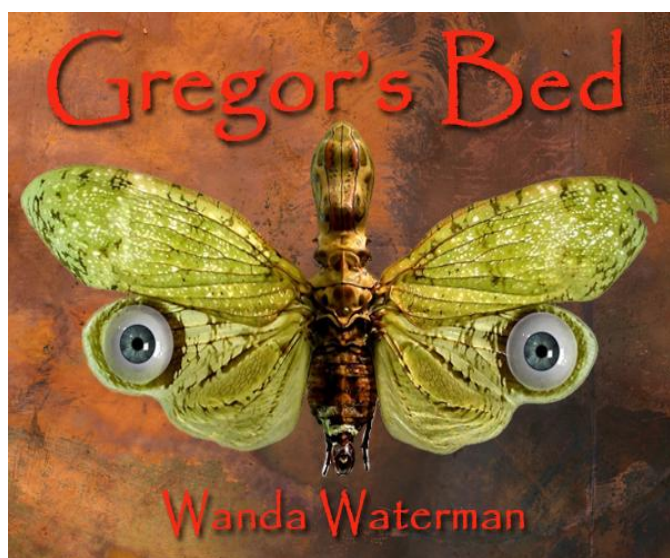
How to consume cranberries? The most recent research suggests that whole cranberries are more beneficial than the pressed juice. The whole berry contains synergistic chemical components that work together to provide extra health benefits like increased antioxidant power and higher anti-inflammatory

effects. Raw, whole cranberries are the best choice; instead of cooking them into cranberry sauce (which reduces some of the benefits), try blending raw cranberries with a sweetener like sugar or honey, and an orange. The fresh, fruity flavour will capture your taste buds instantly!

They're popular at this time of year, but remember that cranberries don't need to be confined to Thanksgiving and other holidays. Try incorporating the bright red berries into your daily diet: raw cranberry purée stirred into yogurt at breakfast or added to your afternoon smoothie make a good start.

*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.*



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

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

***Read Part I of the series [here](#).***

*“An avant-garde man is like an enemy inside a city he is bent on destroying, against which he rebels; for like any system of government, an established form of expression is also a form of oppression. The avant-garde man is the opponent of an existing system. ”*

Eugène Ionesco

One obvious benefit of avant-garde art is the challenge it presents to artistic traditions, traditions which do tend to get rather full of themselves and which, in their love for comfort, eventually start echoing whatever's in vogue at the moment (I'm not here referring to the very legitimate practice of taking inspiration from other authentic art). The avant-garde pushes us out of our comfort zones and compels us to look at life from a different angle.

Yes, it does sometimes seem like the art was done by monkeys or the music played by toddlers or the camera just set on a tripod and allowed to pick up whatever passed in front of it. But this is definitely not the case. The avant-garde is all the more rigorous because the rules are emerging from the work itself and the artist must be extremely mindful of trespassing against these rules.

In this way the avant-garde is closest to the essence of art itself, because it's of the nature of art to generate its own rules. Older, more established forms and genres have simply been around so long that they are perceived as having common patterns that are mistaken for rules and imposed as such on artists.

To quote poet John Ashbery:

*"But always and sometimes questioning the old modes  
And the new wondering, the poem, growing up through the floor,  
Standing tall in tubers, invading and smashing the ritual  
Parlor, demands to be met on its own terms now,  
Now that the preliminary negotiations are at last over."*

If it were not for art's need to create its own rules, new art could be generated by computers and mass-produced on assembly lines. The avant-garde is what keeps art intrinsically tied not just to human beings, but to human beings who remain connected to the processes of time and change and growth, processes resisted by the ordinary and embraced by those courageous enough to be honest about their personal responses to it.

***"The avant-garde is what keeps art intrinsically tied not just to human beings, but to human beings who remain connected to the processes of time and change and growth."***

Such artists are of course born with a tendency toward artistic sensibility. At the same time, they also have somehow become profoundly disillusioned with the conventional and have sought means of transcending or even sabotaging it.

Like Franz Kafka, whose sisters died in concentration camps. Ordinary life becomes uncomfortable to certain people after a while; it makes us want to wake up as something different, even if that something different makes us detestable to those we love.

Gregor is the protagonist in Kafka's story *The Metamorphosis*. He wakes one morning to find that he's become a monstrous insect: helpless, frightening, and a burden to his family, yet still as sensitive and insightful as ever. The story is so deeply metaphorical that it can represent any number of specific human dilemmas, one of which is the problem of the artist who has a new idea that cannot be immediately understood by his audience.

For or against the avant-garde? Neither, really. The avant-garde comes in all shapes and sizes, some good, some awful, and some downright offensive, but all have the potential to be understood— even adored— later on. As a component of art at large, the avant-garde is indispensable.

And exploring the avant-garde can be incredibly *fun*. So bring it on; there'll always be time to separate the wheat from the chaff later. In the meantime, don't be afraid to just experience it.



## THE MINDFUL BARD

Wanda Waterman

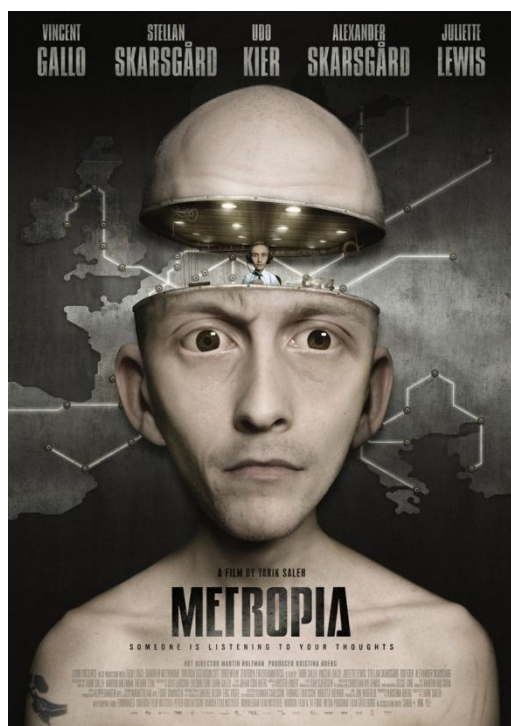


Image courtesy of Atmo.

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

Film: *Metropia* (Atmo 2009)

Director: Tarik Saleh

Script: Fredrik Edin, Stig Larsson, Tarik Saleh

Cast: Vincent Gallo, Juliette Lewis, Udo Kier, Stellan Skarsgård, Alexander Skarsgård, Sofia Helin

Brazil's 1984-Style *Matrix* in 21<sup>st</sup>-Century Sweden

At the end of the workday, Roger, our hero of the speculated future, leaves his Dilbert-hell call centre job to enter the rainy post-holocaust landscape of 2024 Stockholm. He discovers that his bicycle—now illegal, by the way, but on which he's been riding to and from work—has been vandalized.

He must now take the Metro, the ubiquitous underground train system, home to his cramped little high-rise apartment. The underground train system is owned by the Trexx Corporation, which promotes itself as the means by which the world will eventually start climbing out of its current woes.

There's a poster on the Metro wall with the outline of a man's profile and the words *LISTEN TO THE INNER YOU*. Around this time, Roger starts hearing The Voice, this guy in his head that carries on conversations with him, argues with him, questions his convictions, and makes some rather frightening suggestions.

Out of the blue, The Voice gives Roger a Stockholm address. Feeling it somehow significant, Roger writes the address on his hand. He's then immediately hustled off the subway platform and into a seedy room, where guards with burly arms question him with Gulag accents while a busker holding a broken guitar sits on the floor by the door and sobs inconsolably into his arm.

*"If you want a picture of the future, imagine a boot stamping on a human face—forever."*

*George Orwell, 1984*

This film was a collaboration among several Scandinavian countries, and the director is a Swedish-Egyptian former graffiti artist. It shows; the whole film is a visual *Twilight of the Gods*, with just the amount of colour you'd find in poor lighting but the same amount of detail you'd see under bright light. The effect is quite surreal.





Image courtesy of Atmo.

The scenes and characters are photographs, altered to seem more real and more contrived at the same time, and then animated. The effect is very “Uncanny Valley”—the faces seem so real that they’re slightly revolting, and so near to us we can practically smell their breath, yet they have a disturbingly artificial quality. The human interactions in the film are so distant, so cold, so insensitive, and so darn *inhuman* that this physical nearness renders the wrinkles on the faces positively hellish. The boundary-

invading close-ups, coupled with the small, confined spaces, the darkness, and the bad weather, add to the claustrophobic quality of the scenes.

One heavily advertised product, Dangst Shampoo, is so prominent it’s almost a character in itself. Dangst Shampoo is the means by which the Trexx Corporation manipulates the thoughts and actions of John Q. Public. It’s a way to silence individuals and replace their desires with desires that pad the corporate purse.

The best science fiction, or more accurately, speculative fiction, is as much about the present as it is about the future. For example: “I was just wondering,” asks Nina of the big boss, “if the shampoo could be used to take control of another person. For example, to take advantage of a young girl, sexually, persuading her against her will, making her think that she wants to when she didn’t.”

Of course this is happening now with a media that sexualizes very young girls, all but screaming at them that their worth lies solely in their desirability as sex objects. In this film, Nina’s question signals a dark secret at the cold heart of an exploitive free market.

In *Metropia* the holocaust was brought on by a financial collapse inevitable in a world of unbridled corporate greed, a theme we’ll probably be seeing more of as writers react to current global financial crises. And it shares with *The Matrix* more than just a love of the underground train motif; *Metropia* makes explicit the implicit *Matrix* message that human beings might deliberately choose to be slaves to illusions created by the marketplace. The film also rounds out 1984’s message by pointing out that absolute control is a primary goal not only of totalitarian regimes but also of other lovers of power—big business, for example.

*“In Metropia the holocaust was brought on by a financial collapse inevitable in a world of unbridled corporate greed, a theme we’ll probably be seeing more of as writers react to current global financial crises.”*

It’s a terribly stylish film, and no surprise. It dishes up generous critiques of existentialism—perhaps the only school of philosophy to have inspired the world of fashion at all (we need to thank the nihilists for black turtlenecks, skinny jeans, berets, pale lips, copious cigarettes, and café poseurs)—and a film that



Image courtesy of Atmo.

counters existentialism should be equally chic. Maybe we'll be seeing more girls sporting wife beaters and arm-covering tattoos, or men with short hair and the very dullest preppy clothes.

But such film-inspired mimicry is for the weak-minded. I may be copying Nina's exquisite double knot updo, but that's irrelevant.

*Metropia* fulfills seven of the Mindful Bard's criteria for films well worth seeing: 1) it is authentic, original, and delightful; 2) it poses and admirably responds to questions that have a direct bearing on my view of existence; 3) it harmoniously unites art with social consciousness, saving me from both seclusion in an ivory tower and slavery to someone else's political agenda; 4) it provides respite from a sick and cruel world, a respite enabling me to renew myself for a return to mindful artistic endeavour; 5) it is about attainment of the true self; 6) it displays an engagement with and compassionate response to suffering; and 7) it renews my enthusiasm for positive social action.

## CHRONICLES OF CRUISCIN LAN

Wanda Waterman





## From Where I Sit

Hazel Anaka

### Advice to and from Writers

Would-be writers seek out the counsel of those who have succeeded. We hope for kernels of inspiration and, please dear God, some shortcuts to success. We latch onto any crumbs of insight or advice buried in the countless how-to books and blogs which have become an industry unto themselves.

I especially love to hear about writers' routines. Do they get up pre-dawn, or write into the wee hours when the entire world is asleep? Do they write a set number of words or pages or hours a day? Do they write longhand like Alistair MacLeod, or with a computer? Do they write in silence at home or in the hubbub of a coffee shop? Do they live and write in New York City (Julia Cameron) or the desert of New Mexico (Natalie Goldberg) or the smaller cities of Saskatoon (Yann Martel) and Edmonton (Lynn Coady)? I want to voyeuristically know it all.

Watching author interviews on *Book TV* allows a peek into (usually) book-filled offices. With some there is chaos; with others, a sort of sterility. My own office leans toward the former because it's too damn small for all I need near me.

I also love leafing through books of quotations by writers. Are they really that clever and cynical, or do they hide their innate insecurity in barbed words of irreverence?

There are many diverse and opposing views on the how-to of writing success. For your consideration I've collected some of the usual aphorisms, followed by a famous quote that either supports or torpedoed it:

- 1) *Writing is a God-given talent.* Or not. Gene Fowler said, "Writing is easy: all you have to do is sit staring at a blank sheet of paper until drops of blood form on your forehead."
- 2) *Write what you know.* Christopher Isherwood seems to agree: "One should never write down or up to people, but out of yourself."
- 3) *Discipline is the answer to success.* For Ernest Hemingway that meant "wearing down seven number-two pencils is a good day's work." Anthony Trollope, on the other hand, thought "Three hours a day will produce as much as a man ought to write."
- 4) *Read, read, read.* Mark Twain said, "The man who does not read good books has no advantage over the man who can't read them." On the other hand, Georg Christoph Lichtenberg said, "A book is a mirror; if an ass peers into it, you can't expect an apostle to peer out."
- 5) *You've got to drink in order to write.* E.B. White said, "Before I write, I always treat myself to a nice dry martini. Just one, to give me the courage to get started. After that, I am on my own." Ring

Lardner believed that “No one, ever, wrote anything as well even after one drink as he would have done without it.”

The final advice comes from Guy de Maupassant: “Get black on white.” Couldn’t have said it better myself, from where I sit.

## CLICK OF THE WRIST

## Pass the Veggies

October is **World Vegetarian Awareness Month**. Even if you’re craving turkey and gravy this weekend, consider implementing a few vegetarian dishes into your Thanksgiving menu—or into your meal plan over the course of the month. Vegetarian fare isn’t bland and tasteless; in fact, a large percentage of the world’s population eats primarily meatless meals, and many of these are bursting with flavour. Add in new interpretations of old stand-bys and international favourites, and you have a menu worthy of any feast. Click through the links for some inspiration!

### **Meatless Mondays**

The Meatless Monday campaign advocates awareness of healthier and more sustainable eating by encouraging the public to pledge to keep just one weekday vegetarian-friendly. The website contains some recipes, but even more resources (including materials for schools and organizations).

### **Vegan MoFo**

Vegan Month of Food—Vegan MoFo for short—is a phenomenon that began online and spread to the community. Food bloggers commit to posting a vegan recipe every day during the month of October. The main site highlights different categories of food each day. For example, one day bloggers who’d posted comfort food recipes were featured. With over 800 bloggers participating, Vegan MoFo is a goldmine of menu ideas.

### **The Lighter Side**

Surprisingly, some vegetarian and vegan recipes come loaded with fat and salt. The Fatfree Vegan Kitchen blog—one of my personal favourites—is full of delicious recipes as well as product and cookbook reviews. Subscribe to her feed or search the archives for recipes—not to mention ways to up the health factor of your vegan table!

### **Waste Not**

You’re all excited about cooking more vegetables—so how to keep produce fresh until you’re ready to use it? This article, from *Vegetarian Times* magazine, has some suggestions and handy charts.





## AUSU UPDATE: AUTUMN 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 1<sup>st</sup>, 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 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](mailto:president@ausu.org). You can also e-mail our office at [ausu@ausu.org](mailto:ausu@ausu.org) or call 1-800-788-9041 ext. 3413. We'd love to hear from you!

*This column is provided by AUSU to facilitate communication with its members. The Voice does not write or edit this section; all content has been exclusively and directly provided by AUSU, and any questions or comments about the material should be directed to [ausu@ausu.org](mailto:ausu@ausu.org).*

## DID YOU KNOW?

## Student Award Finder



Scholarships can seem difficult to locate, particularly for distance learning students. Search engines tend to be inefficient at locating a good match, and scrolling through lists of possibilities is usually a frustrating task.

Good news: you may be eligible to apply for one of Athabasca University's many scholarships. They're available to both undergraduate and graduate students—and they're easy to find. Check out the [Student Award Finder page](#) and answer the questions to narrow your search criteria. You'll be able to see the total number of awards available as you compile your preferences, and you can adjust criteria without too much hassle. Then, click "View Awards" for a list of the scholarships for which you may be eligible to apply.

But hurry; the deadline for many of the scholarships and awards is approaching soon on October 15, 2011.

## INTERNATIONAL NEWS DESK



### At Home: Birthing Live

Most pre-birth seminars involve a “realistic” film of the childbirth experience—and it’s often scarring. But Canadian birthing coach Nancy Salgueiro is combatting the negative stereotypes: she’s live-streaming video of her third child’s impending birth.

As *The Toronto Star* [reports](#), the Ottawa mom—who’s also a chiropractor—told reporters that she’s hoping to send the message that childbirth is “a wonderful, empowering joyous experience.”

While childbirth is often viewed as a frightening experience fraught with danger, Nancy and her husband want to offer a view, as it were, on the alternative. Women focus on the horror stories because “[nobody] has any idea what really happens,” Nancy told reporters, adding that “[the] whole point is to normalize birth.”

Her plan is to have a home birth attended by two midwives. However, in the room a webcam will be recording the event—live—

for the 1,000-some people who have signed up to receive the stream. The camera will be “placed so the stream is appropriate for all audiences and avoids graphic imagery.”

Nancy is due to give birth this month.

### Around the World: Mercury, the Pitted Planet

Tom and Jerry mistakenly believed the moon was made of green cheese. And although the planet Mercury isn’t made of Swiss cheese—that we know of—it certainly looks like it in places. Recent photos from the planet closest to the sun show pitted landforms that may be unique in our solar system.

As *National Geographic’s* Daily News site [reports](#), the landforms, called hollows, are found in impact craters and resemble “shallow, rimless, irregularly shaped depressions—similar to the holes in Swiss cheese.”

Although the depressions occur only in impact craters, they’re “widespread” to all corners of the planet. Their sizes are relatively small, and unlike typical planetary depressions, many of Mercury’s hollows “have smooth, flat bottoms and feature highly reflective material.”

Scientists are mystified about the origin of the landforms’ unique shape and texture. Rimless holes can be formed by volcanic activity, but the size and location of these hollows seem to indicate otherwise. Additionally, the hollows appear recent and haven’t “been reshaped by later impact events.”

Scientists compare the features to those found on Martian polar icecaps, although Mercury’s are unique in that they form on “solid rock.” One current theory is that solar wind is involved.

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# CLASSIFIEDS

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Classifieds are free for AU students! Contact [voice@voicemagazine.org](mailto:voice@voicemagazine.org) for more information.

## THE VOICE

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*The Voice* is published every Friday in HTML and PDF format.

Contact *The Voice* at [voice@voicemagazine.org](mailto:voice@voicemagazine.org).

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