

# THE VOICE

## MAGAZINE

Vol 20 Iss 01 2012-01-06

## *Best of 2011!*

### **Author Alert**

So you wanna publish?

### **Distracted**

Daydream to success

### **Drum Line**

The Bard & the *cuica*

*Plus many more of 2011's  
top articles and features . . .*



# CONTENTS

*The Voice's* interactive Table of Contents allows you to click a story title to jump to an article. Clicking the bottom right corner of any page returns you here. Some ads and graphics are also links.

## Features

Best of <i>The Voice</i> 2011 .....	3
Editorial: Possessive .....	5
So You Think You Can Publish?.....	6
In Review: <i>Dystopia</i> .....	9
The Dare .....	11
Study Space: Distract Me .....	15

## Columns

Health Matters: Time for Bed.....	17
The Mindful Bard: The <i>Cuica</i> Story.....	19
From Where I Sit: A State of Mind .....	21
Write Stuff: Digital Dinosaurs.....	22

## News and Events

Write for Us! .....	4
Did You Know?.....	14
AUSU Update .....	24

## From Our Readers

Letters to the Editor .....	2
-----------------------------	---

***The Voice  
Magazine***

[www.voicemagazine.org](http://www.voicemagazine.org)

1213, 10011 109th St. NW  
Edmonton AB  
T5J 3S8

800.788.9041 ext. 2905

Email

[voice@voicemagazine.org](mailto:voice@voicemagazine.org)

**Publisher**

AU Students' Union

**Editor-In-Chief**

Tamra Ross

**Managing Editor**

Christina M. Frey

**Regular Contributors**

Hazel Anaka  
Katie D'Souza  
S.D. Livingston  
Wanda Waterman

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

For weekly email  
reminders as each issue is  
posted, fill out the  
subscription form [here](#).

*The Voice* does not share  
its subscriber list with  
anyone.

© 2012 by *The Voice*

# LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

We love to hear from you! Send your questions and  
comments to [voice@voicemagazine.org](mailto:voice@voicemagazine.org), and please  
indicate if we may publish your letter.



## BEST OF THE VOICE 2011

Christina M. Frey



Happy New Year!

Are you ready for 2012? It's a big year for *The Voice Magazine*: 2012 marks our 20-year anniversary, and we'll be celebrating all year with special content reflecting the past two decades of history that have made *The Voice* what it is today.

And what better way to start off our look at the past than with our annual Best of *The Voice* issue? It's an opportunity to highlight some of the best writing from 2011—and give a sampling of the wide mix of articles, stories, features, and styles you'll find in any given issue.

Students struggling to balance work, family, and studies often appreciate the ideas, tips, and trends covered in our "Study Space" feature. We've reprinted one piece that questions the notion of keeping ourselves distraction-free. Try it!

Balance in life is important regardless of your student status. We often feature pieces that challenge readers to think about life choices in a new light. With Valentine's Day coming up, be sure to reread the editorial "Possessive" for a unique perspective on materialism.

If fiction's your thing, check out the chilling "The Dare," written by AU student Max Birkner. We feature several short stories a year, and are always looking to discover new writers and new styles. Send us your work!

If you're keen on writing in general, S.D. Livingston often discusses trends and pitfalls in the self-publishing business. Her "So You Think You Can Publish?" gives a dose of reality—and some good advice.

*Voice* readers can also look forward to regular contributions from our dedicated columnists. Enjoy discovering aesthetically pleasing—and socially relevant—books, music, and film? You'll want to check out The Mindful Bard's regular reviews, written by Wanda Waterman. A highlight of 2011 occurred when several Bard picks aligned together in a heartwarming story that we've reprinted in this issue.

***Celebrate with us:  
2012 is the 20-year  
anniversary of The  
Voice. Watch for  
special content  
throughout the year!***

For general musings on life, family, and career, many readers anticipate Hazel Anaka's long-running column, "From Where I Sit." In this issue, she shares some of the joys and pains of waiting for harvest to start.



Naturopathic doctor Katie D’Souza covers health issues and trends in the natural health industry in her “Health Matters” column. Here, we’ve reprinted her tips for ensuring a better night’s sleep. How healthy is your sleep hygiene?

And for a unique perspective on the world of words, S.D. Livingston’s column “Write Stuff” tackles everything from self-publishing to e-book trends to censorship. One of the column’s highlights last year was a warning look at new trends in information storage. Technology isn’t always better!

Each week you’ll see other features, including first-person accounts by students, interviews, course reviews, and more. And don’t forget some of our other fan favourites, including the socially relevant commentary in the “Chronicles of Cruiscin Lan” comic. We also publish in-depth reviews of both popular and lesser-known books and film; in the light of all the end-of-the-world hype this year, be sure to look at Karl Low’s review of *Dystopia*.

Finally, each week you’ll find news bites, trivia, and a regular “Did You Know” segment that highlights websites and services of special interest to students. There’s something for everyone in *The Voice Magazine*.

From its beginnings as a quarterly print newspaper to the current weekly online format to future changes that we hope to unveil this year, *The Voice* has a unique history—and an exciting future.

Come join us on the ride!



## Write for Us!

What topics and issues do you want to see covered in *The Voice*? What type of features do you like best? *The Voice* wants to hear from you! Email us at [voice@voicemagazine.org](mailto:voice@voicemagazine.org) with your ideas, letters, and suggestions.

And if you’ve got something to say about university life, or life in general, consider writing for *The Voice Magazine*. We’re always seeking new voices and fresh perspectives—and submissions from our readers are welcome! To find out more about becoming a *Voice* writer, email the editors at [voice@voicemagazine.org](mailto:voice@voicemagazine.org). All accepted submissions are purchased as freelance pieces.

## EDITORIAL

Christina M. Frey

## Possessive

*This editorial first appeared February 11, 2011, in issue 1906.*

With February 14 just around the corner, the card companies, chocolate manufacturers, and florists are out in full force. With all that comes the inevitable barrage of Valentine's-related media, ranging from romantic classics marathons on the old movies channel to pop psychology articles encouraging us to use the holiday as a springboard to improve relationships in all aspects of our lives. And of course there are the countless op-ed rants about the commercialism that's destroyed the meaning of the holiday—or about our materialism in general.

Because we love our possessions too much. And that's the problem, right? Isn't it that love of stuff that gets in the way of our relationships with others—and with ourselves?

Maybe not. According to some thoughts posted on TreeHugger.com, we've got it all backwards: our materialism problem comes from the fact that we don't love our stuff *enough*. Because we don't love or appreciate what we have, we get bored with it quickly and waste time, effort, and emotional (not to mention financial) resources on the constant business of trading it in for more and better.

The blogger likens this relationship to the “consumer equivalent . . . of a one night stand,” calling it more like “lust” than anything else. I love that imagery. And it rings true; when it comes to possessions, we're pretty fickle, tending to discard them quickly in order to chase after the next cool thing.

On the other hand, improving our relationship with the things we already have opens a lot of doors. For example, we're no longer slaves to what I call the “2.0 phenomenon”—our endless pursuit of the bigger model, the new gotta-have-it toy. Breaking the bonds of that type of consumerism brings a certain level of contentment. “Need” and “want” meld into one, and we're more peaceful because we no longer *have* to get anything. We're good with what we've got.

Ironically, as the TreeHugger blogger pointed out, this attitude means our stuff will actually end up being better. After all, if we've got commitment in mind, we'll want to make sure that what we buy will be a good fit for us for the long haul. This means that we'll gravitate toward the better made, the more practical, and the more suited to us.

As a result, we'll also be better off financially. Committing to our purchases, rather than buying them because we want them right now (although maybe not tomorrow or next week) will do much to reduce the problem of consumer debt. Without the constant “need” to replace what we've got with something better, overspending's much less of an issue.

There are society-wide benefits, too: we'll end up living a more sustainable lifestyle, and not merely because we'll throw fewer things in the trash. In fact, we'll reduce manufacturing drains on resources all the way down the chain.

And most importantly, loving our "stuff"—or renewing our commitment to what we have and what we buy—can bring peace not only within ourselves but within our families and among our friends. Jealousy, greed, and other possession-related squabbles are replaced with contentment, peace, and financial freedom. How's that for a sweet Valentine's Day gift?

---

## SO YOU THINK YOU CAN PUBLISH?

S.D. Livingston

*This article originally appeared May 20, 2011, in issue 1919.*



So you want to be a writer. Better yet, a *published* writer. The good news is that you have the power to make that happen—at less expense and to a wider audience than ever. The bad news? Well, that depends on what your version of a self-published home run looks like, but there are plenty of pitfalls to watch out for. Here we'll take a look at some resources to guide you on your way—and, just maybe, save aspiring indie writers time and money.

Let's suppose you've got a glimmer of the world's best self-help book floating around in your head. Or you've just finished your Great American Novel and can't wait to introduce it to the world. Either way, the most valuable nugget of truth you'll find is this: self-publishing is not a get-rich-quick scheme. Sure, fine. You already know that. Except maybe, just maybe, *your* book is different and it will serendipitously land in just the right person's hands . . .

So I'll say it again. Self-publishing is *not* a get-rich-quick scheme. Which is why you need to be straight with yourself about your reasons for doing it. If you just want a few copies of your travel memoir to share with friends, you'll probably find some of these cautionary links valuable. On the other hand, if you're in it to build a career, you might want to bookmark some of the industry-related sites and set aside some serious reading time. (And even then, if you've still got dreams of instant Hocking-esque success, don't forget she'd been honing her skills and collecting rejections for nine years before hitting it big.)

No matter what your publishing goals are, one of the most valuable sites you'll find is the [Writer Beware](#) blog. It's written by A.C. Crispin and Victoria Strauss (along with occasional guest bloggers), and they're not fooling when they say the site "shines a bright light into the dark corners of the shadow-world of literary scams, schemes, and pitfalls." Read it. Search the archives. Keep reading. At the very least, you could save yourself from falling into the pit of a [vanity press](#).

Which brings us to the subject of pay to play. These schemes aren't new, and they all have one thing in common: the "publisher" makes its money by charging writers exorbitant fees for services and, in a lot of cases, obligating the writer to buy dozens of copies of his own books. They run the gamut from premium publishing packages to vanity anthologies, but the bottom line's the same. They make their money off writers, not book sales. Unless you're prepared to throw thousands of dollars away on overpriced services of dubious quality, run.

So what's an aspiring indie author to do? There are plenty of options, and they, too, have a common element: just like reputable agents and publishers, they take their cut from actual book sales, not writers' pockets. If you're still not sure of the difference, this Writer Beware post explains it clearly.

*"Self-publishing is not a get-rich-quick scheme . . . you need to be straight with yourself about your reasons for doing it."*

Before we start dropping names here, there's an important distinction to make. Publishers typically take all the financial risks. They pay for acquisition editors, copy editors, cover design, publishing, and so on. If you're going to self-publish, it's not unreasonable that those costs now belong to you. Legitimate editors, artists, and layout and conversion providers get paid. Period. They're professionals providing services for a fee. But vanity presses often lure writers with veiled promises of the "inside track" that comes with premium packages, never mind the need to buy thousands of dollars' worth of your own book. A good editor or proofreader does just that, with no promises or obligations beyond a job well done.

When it comes to getting your book in front of readers, the big name (for now) is Amazon. Although the landscape's shifting, they still own the lion's share of the market, and they offer two relatively simple and cost-free ways to publish. The first is Kindle Direct Publishing (KDP) and the other is CreateSpace, which is print-on-demand. Say what you will about Amazon's cutthroat business approach, they've created a pleasant user interface and host friendly, well-moderated community discussion boards.

Two notes about this distribution channel. The first is that CreateSpace offers a Pro Plan option for \$39 US, but everything I've seen in the community points to the cost being worth it, especially since it translates into higher royalties.



The other note is for non-US writers. Amazon (and other US sales channels) don't have a choice and must withhold 30 per cent for the IRS unless you provide a special US tax number. The process is a little convoluted but definitely doable—I got one with minimal hassle—but here's the trick: you need a signed paper copy of a letter from the distributor, and I've yet to hear of a writer that's managed to finagle one out of Amazon. On that point, KDP scores a fail.



And that brings us to [Smashwords](#). If you're seeking broad e-book distribution without the trouble of managing individual sales channels, look no further. Smashwords founder Mark Coker has made it remarkably painless to get your books into Sony's Reader Store, Apple's iBooks, Barnes & Noble, Kobo,

*"Don't forget the emerging trend among publishers to wait for indie books to climb the charts before making an offer."*

Diesel Books, and into mobile e-reading apps like Stanza and Aldiko. Can you negotiate your way into several of these channels yourself? Yes, but if you'd rather spend your time writing than submitting invoices and creating a variety of formats, giving up a share of royalties might be worth it.

Again, a couple of things bear mentioning. Much like KDP, Smashwords doesn't dictate what should or shouldn't be published, short of some rules about offensive content. So don't be surprised to see some dreck if you land on the homepage, but don't let that turn you off either. Like indie titles in general, you'll find some absolute gems among the muck—and Smashwords lets you filter by bestsellers and highest rated. Where Mark and the Smashwords team score high is their honesty about what to expect, their suggestions for marketing, their transparency via regular site updates, and their willingness to send that all-important US tax letter once your royalties hit the \$10 mark.

One of the final names I'll mention is [Lulu](#). Much like Amazon's KDP service, Lulu is an established player and lets you self-publish everything from novels to photo calendars. It's a print-on-demand service, and unless you opt to pay for their upgraded services it doesn't cost you, the publisher, a thing.

That covers the main bases; now you've got your homework cut out for you. But if you're serious about building an indie career, there are a couple of other sites you can't afford to miss. One is [The Book Designer](#) blog by Joel Friedlander. He generously shares decades of experience in his articles on everything from cover design to editing, and your time will be well spent.

When it comes to the realities of earning your daily bread as an indie, you'll get a refreshing dose of it from JA Konrath over at his [blog](#), A Newbie's Guide to Publishing. Don't say you haven't been warned.

If you're still not convinced that publishers and agents often reject quality writing, take a minute to check out this [Guardian piece](#) on how Lionel Shriver's "widely rejected manuscript become a best-selling, prize-winning novel, then a book-club favourite and now the toast of the Cannes film festival." And don't forget the emerging trend among publishers to wait for indie books to climb the charts before making an offer. Like Corvus, which just [acquired seven titles](#) by a self-published writer.

Write on.



## IN REVIEW

Karl Low



## Looking Toward Dystopia

*This review first appeared March 11, 2011, in issue 1910.*

More than half of all North Americans believe that one day the Second Coming will occur, signalling the end of the world. About 20 per cent of American Christians believe it will happen in their lifetime.

And then there are those of us who don't expect we'll get the warning.

From super-volcanoes to asteroid extinction, peak oil to bioterrorism, global warming to genetically modified organisms, the number of vulnerabilities our civilization has is truly frightening. And the remains of Easter Island, Sumer, and Ancient Rome all stand as mute testaments to the notion that civilizations, even advanced ones, can fall.

There's a growing market for examinations into the fall of civilizations. Rare is the night when you can watch the Discovery Channel, for example, without seeing some show depicting what life might be like without civilization as we know it. And currently, one of the more popular films on YouTube is *Zeitgeist*, a conspiracy theory-laden look at what might be herding our own civilization into destruction. With this in mind, when I heard of the movie *Dystopia: What is to be done?*, I was intrigued.

Available freely over the [web](#), *Dystopia: What is to be done?* is an hour-long look into some of the more pressing issues currently facing society. It is a project of Dr. Garry Potter, Director of Graduate Studies for Wilfrid Laurier University's Department of Sociology, and is also a tie-in to his [book](#) of the same name. An accompanying website outlines his research into our modern civilization's problems; that section alone was worth it to me.

Dr. Potter is frank in pointing out that the film's conception was partly in reaction to the attention garnered by *Zeitgeist*, which he says involves "a lot of quackery . . . instead of social scientific analysis." However, he also admits that, at least in comparison, *Dystopia* hasn't done that well, with only 13,000 hits on the film's website (compared to millions for *Zeitgeist* and its translations) and book sales comparable to his other academic texts. That leaves *Dystopia* with only its message as its reason for being.

The documentary is composed of alternating clips of popular movies, other documentaries, and stock or news footage, with a backdrop of ominous music. It is all narrated by Dr. Potter, to whom it occasionally cuts. To my mind, it feels too much like propaganda or a negative political campaign advertisement, hoping to generate and then capitalize on a fear-based emotional response—which is really too bad, because if you get beyond that and into the narrative, what Dr. Potter has to say is interesting and well-presented. In fact, the "lecture" portions of the film had more of an impact on me than when the message was being drowned under images. Dr. Potter speaks engagingly and honestly in the film, something I found continued when I interviewed him.

But Dr. Potter candidly states that his choice of dramatic and ominous pieces of film and soundtrack was deliberate, saying, “I had an analytical message to deliver but politics . . . is a battle for hearts as well as minds; hence the dramatic imagery.”

***“Individualist consumer decisions are not the way to go . . . what is required is collective action.”  
Dr. Garry Potter***

However, he notes that his message is not political in the traditional sense. “First,” he says, “what is required is *collective* action, political action in the broad sense. Individualist consumer decisions are *not* the way to go on this.” Additionally, he notes, “the politics I advocate are outside the . . . mainstream of party politics.”

Indeed, one of the repeated slogans of the movie is that humanity is faced with a choice between socialism and barbarism, and that the time remaining to make this choice in a conscious and rational manner is running out. Obviously, that’s not going to be a popular message. And while I think Dr. Potter did himself and his film no favours by using the word socialism, since so many North Americans have a mistaken understanding of what the word means, he disagrees. “I don’t think the socialist message should be presented as something to be embarrassed about, something that should be whispered gently in case it offends,” he says. In fact, he suggests that “in a world of diminishing finite resources, rational cooperation is mandatory for our very survival.”

Whether or not you agree with Dr. Potter’s overall solution, the film also presents some smaller, specific actions that are easy to do, and which certainly can’t hurt. For example, he recommends actions like joining a boycott of Walmart, one of the most anti-humanistic corporations on the planet.

The best thing about the film is that although it certainly presents the problems we may soon face, it manages to maintain an air of optimism while still staying realistic. This leads me to my last exchange with Dr. Potter, one that I think is best presented verbatim:

**Q:** Do you realistically feel there is a chance that the world will make the choice for “socialism over barbarism”? Especially given our precedent and the sophistication/allure of the capitalist ideal?

**Dr. Potter:** Absolutely honestly? I just don’t know. I want to be hopeful, and there really are some hopeful signs: say for example, the people protesting in the streets of Cairo, or the students who recently took to the streets in the UK. But of course there are contrary signs as well; and, as you say, there is the sophistication and allure of the capitalist ideal. I think that it is impossible to finally judge. Overall it is just too big a question with too many variables. So what I think is the rational perspective to take is what Gramsci suggested many years ago: pessimism of the intellect along with optimism of the will.

The film *Dystopia: What is to be done?* is freely available [online](#), and the accompanying book can be found at major retailers.



## FICTION

Max Birkner



## The Dare

*This short story first appeared June 24, 2011, in issue 1923.*

That summer we had started playing capture the flag in the cemetery a lot. Pat and James and I, and some other kids from school: the usual crowd. We'd sneak around and crouch behind the big tombstones late at night, talking on those little Motorola radios you can buy at Canadian Tire. Most of the time, it was awesome.

But one night in July there was nothing to do. Everyone else had gone up to the music festival in Pemberton, and the three of us had been drinking in the basement at Pat's place.

"Let's go down to the graveyard," someone said. Maybe it was Pat, I don't remember.

But we went. It was about midnight on a weekday and the back streets were quiet. It had been a wet summer, so the street glistened in the faint light. The Bacardi sloshed in the bottle as we raised it up and down and passed it on.

We got to the cemetery right there by Fraser Street. Lights were on across the street, and I wondered who in the world would buy a house beside a graveyard.

Toward the middle of the block, right where a gated road bisected the cemetery, there was an open grave and a big orange Cat sleeping soundly on its tracks. We tried the door to see if there was anything to mess with in there, but it was locked. When I was about to say we should go somewhere else, Pat jumped down into the grave. It was six feet deep. His forehead was underground, and his blonde head looked up at us.

"Dude . . . can you imagine . . ."

"No," I said. I was drunk, but not that drunk.

Stop for a sec. I need to talk about Pat. He makes up his mind and no one can stop him. A year ago, when we were in Grade 10, Gordie from work said he'd give Pat a commission to steal his car and drive it out to an old road by the Britannia Mine and torch it for the insurance money. Only Gordie almost chickened out at the last minute, called Pat on his cell, and said, "Don't do it!"

"So what does Pat do?" James told me later, breathless on the phone. "He hot-wires the thing and takes it anyway." And Gordie got the insurance money, no one the wiser. They actually got away with it.

So that night in the cemetery, Pat didn't even hesitate when James said, "I dare you . . ."

The next day we built a coffin out of plywood stolen from the Polygon site by the China Creek skate park. Easy enough. In the right corner of one end we left a hole about two inches by two inches, then went



down to the hardware store and bought seven feet of PVC piping and a noodle-shaped angle joint that we welded on with crazy glue. That was to keep rain or dirt out.

"You sure you want to do this?" James asked. Maybe the dare had been one of those rhetorical ones. The crazy ones that people tell lies about, lies that everyone loves because they know they're not true and they know no one would ever be dumb enough to take the dare, even if they got put on the spot.

*Yup, Pat nodded. Hell's yeah. That'd be it. This is why junk like this is worth it. Nobody could top a story like this.*

First we planned to go in the woods by UBC to do it.

"Naw," Pat said. "Go big or go home, man."

It was almost like this side of him I'd never met. Even more crazy than the first Pat, a version that had just showed up one day as we got older. Definitely not the blond kid whom I'd ridden BMXs and set off Amish bombs with since we first tried smoking at age seven.

Still, this was a kid who had once dived down and gone inside an old boat which had rotted and sunk by its moorings in False Creek. Breathed air from a bicycle tube which was linked to six others by duct tape, while one of us up top on the old dock held onto the end. But he hadn't been down there for very long.

We drove out to the roads where we always went shooting with James' dad—the logging roads by the Britannia Mine where Pat had blown up the car. We parked the old red Subaru at a turnaround point 10 kilometres off the highway.

James had a nervous-horse thing going on, breathing fast through his nose and looking around. His hands were shaking. "I don't think you should do it," he said.

Pat swore at him. "Relax, dude," he said. "This is like that trust thing we do at school. You know, fall backwards off the chair into everybody's arms."

"I never did that," James said.

"I did it once and I got dropped," I interjected, and Pat just laughed.

The hole didn't take long. The soil was wet and leafy. It always rained up here along the Sea to Sky. We had to take turns digging when we got further down, since only one guy could dig down there at a time.

I'll never forget the way Pat lay down in the coffin. He folded his arms over his chest and shut his eyes, but kept looking up at us under his lashes, as if someone had not closed his eyes quite properly after he died.

"Stop it, that's way too creepy," I said.

We closed the lid and lowered him down on two nylon ropes from the car. Then we put the PVC air pipe into place and James jumped down and sealed around the edges with duct tape so dirt wouldn't fall in.

"Are you sure you're up to this?" he asked.

*"Relax, dude," Pat said.  
"This is like that trust  
thing we do at school.  
You know, fall backwards  
off the chair into  
everybody's arms."*

"I'm good," Pat's voice echoed. Maybe there was a tremor in it now. It was hard to tell with the noise coming up through the pipe.

James looked at me and I looked at him, and then we started to fill in the hole. The soft, dark earth made hollow thumps as it landed on the wooden lid.

Now there was just a low mound about six feet long. It felt weird talking down into a pipe. I had to lean way down and bend my head upward at an angle, like drinking from a water fountain. "Pat? You there?"

"Where the hell else would I be?" He sounded like he was calling on a pay phone from some distant country.

"Okay . . . We're going now . . . Have a good night . . ." And then we walked away. We left the shovels and the rope right there to wait for us.

On the drive home, we didn't look at each other.

The fog was rolling in from the ocean. I couldn't even see the islands anymore. The rain came again and pelted the windshield.

"Whatever," James said. "He'll be fine."

*We were coming  
around a sharp  
bend when the  
truck hit us.*

"He's got balls."

Condensation lay thick on the windows. The heater in the old car only worked once in a while—usually only on the warmest days.

James broke the silence again. "Can you wipe it off? I can't see anything."

"Sure." There was a red rag in the glove compartment just for that.

I was wiping and James hit the button on the radio. Static. "Man . . . it's not my day." He fiddled with the knob.

We were coming around a sharp bend when the truck hit us.

Just winged us, but it was enough to send us off the edge, plummeting toward the sea through the evergreens, tumbling us around like clothes in a dryer.

My last thought was the image of a crumpled car like the one on the back of the school agenda that every kid got to keep track of homework and classes. It was an ad against drunk driving.

Four days later I woke up in a hospital bed. I was on and off drugs for over three weeks. People came by to visit. Mom and Dad. James' parents, since we got moved into the same room. He was a lot worse off than I since he'd been on the driver's side when we got hit. They kept wheeling him in and out for one operation or another—a brain scan, an x-ray—every day a different menu. Both his legs were up in splints and he was in a coma. His ribs had punctured both his lungs when they broke: a double tension-pneumothorax, someone said. Doctor talk for a closed sucking chest wound.

We'd stopped rolling right side up, half-in and half-out of the ocean by the rocky shore. The waves had been coming through the shattered windows. North Shore Rescue had been first on scene, and SARTECH had come from Comox with a chopper to lift us out.

For a while I was blind. Somebody, the same somebody with a deep voice who'd told me about James' chest, said my skull was fractured, that both orbital bones around my eyes were broken. I had broken ribs and a fractured wrist. But I would be okay. It was too early to know how long I'd be in physio.

I kept wondering, in the haze, why Pat hadn't come by. We were best friends.

Then a VPD detective came to ask about him. Pat had disappeared on the day of the crash. Had he been with us?

That's when I remembered.

I couldn't shake my head. I couldn't even talk properly because I'd nearly bit my tongue off when we were falling.

"I don't know where he is," I mumbled. "I don't know where he was that day."



## DID YOU KNOW?

LibriVox



A picture may be worth a thousand words, but what about the spoken word? Sometimes, it can be of priceless value—especially when experiencing literary works. If you love audiobooks, have vision issues, or just want to experience literature from a different perspective, be sure to check out the fantastic resources offered by [LibriVox](#), an “acoustical liberation of books in the public domain.”

LibriVox is a non-profit, volunteer-staffed project with an ambitious goal: its founders desire “[to] make all books in the public domain available, for free, in audio format on the internet.” Their ever-expanding catalogue includes literary works from *Beowulf* to Sinclair Lewis, and it's not limited to English-language works; Kafka's *Metamorphosis* is available in its original German, for example.

To listen to a work, you can freely download the files onto your computer or subscribe through iTunes. On the go? Audio files can also be downloaded to your smart phone, and there are unaffiliated iPhone and Android apps which streamline the process. LibriVox's [podcasts](#) are currently highlighting some of the [options](#) available.

## STUDY SPACE

Maxie van Roye

## Distract Me

*This feature originally appeared March 25, 2011, in issue 1912.*



Are you a daydreamer? Does your mind constantly wander? Do you think up your best ideas while taking a shower or going for a run? You're not crazy—and you're not alone.

According to psychologists, certain settings are more conducive to creativity and invention—and it's not necessarily a quiet office with all the modern

technological paraphernalia, or even a place where distractions are nil.

Scientists suggest that activities that don't require much "concentration on any aspect of the task at hand" lend themselves easily to inspiration. This means that if you're stuck on part two of an essay, it might be a good idea to take a break from it and do something simple to allow your mind to wander. Odds are good that the idea will eventually come to you if you let it.

Sound counterintuitive? It's difficult to justify purposeful daydreaming. After all, we're trained from early childhood that forward-focused is the only route to productivity. Isn't daydreaming the proverbial side path that leads to nowhere?

Perhaps not. We've all heard the adage about genius being only one per cent inspiration. But you still need that one per cent, and one of the best ways to delve into our hidden genius is to give ourselves the chance for positive distraction.

For example, it's believed that Albert Einstein conceived the theory of relativity while daydreaming—around the same time that he was expelled from school. And other Nobel Prize winners, inventors, and thinkers throughout history have found inspiration by allowing their brains to wander.

***"[W]hile we're proudly multi-tasking, our brains are so busy planning our next several moves that there's little room for the associative thought that leads to creative genius and inventive ideas."***

Physiologically, it's a function of our constantly-active brains. We're more than mere fight-or-flight; scientists are now realizing that "the brain is a pro-active system that is continually at work helping us solve problems and prepare for future demands."

In other words, while we're proudly multi-tasking, our brains are so busy planning our next several moves that there's little room for the associative thought that leads to creative genius and inventive ideas.



But when our brains are allowed to freely wander, with little else holding their attention, “one idea can trigger the next across a relatively unconstrained range of concepts and associations that might otherwise be viewed as completely unrelated.”

***It may sound counterintuitive, but daydreaming can be productive. It allows our brains to recharge and refocus—and opens us up to our creative side.***

The solution might be to start looking at our brains as another body part, one that needs daily care. We’re urged to avoid eye strain when reading or working at the computer, so we adjust our monitors, ensure proper lighting, and look away from the screen (or page) periodically. We make an effort to give our eyes a break and a chance to refocus.

Maybe it’s an equally good idea to give our brains a rest. There’s plenty of advice out there about scheduling in time to pursue our hobbies and personal interests. But although these are important

for recharging our enthusiasm and zest for life, they may not be sufficient.

We need to allow our minds to relax by letting them engage, guilt-free, in positive daydreaming.

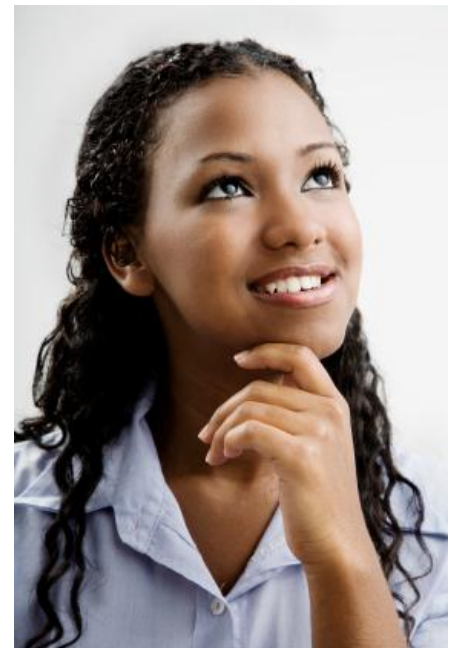
Unfortunately, this is a little difficult in practice. Unlike eyesight exercises, daydreaming isn’t something we can necessarily schedule. According to scientists, our most productive daydreaming—when we’re most likely to solve problems or, say, come up with the theory of relativity—happens when we’re “unaware that we have drifted off.”

However, we can condition ourselves to daydream productively. The Second Act, a productivity blog, offers some good suggestions for getting into the relaxed state necessary to get our minds out of overdrive. The author recommends that we start by directing the focus of our daydreams—which gets us out of the habit of unproductive daydreaming (for example, obsessing over the rudeness of the other drivers this morning).

Performing some physical activity, particularly one that doesn’t require a lot of step-by-step brain action, is also conducive to problem-solving thought. Going for a run and taking a brisk walk are physically focused, and, although the brain is engaged, it’s not so overtasked that it can’t stray into the type of daydreaming that taps into our creative side.

Most of us struggle with procrastination, but the temptation to procrastinate may be linked to our brain’s desperate desire to take a rest from all the input we throw at it. And regardless of whether we discover some great theory of physics or dream up a brilliant invention, we’re doing our body and mind a favour by allowing ourselves the chance to positively daydream.

In fact, giving our brains a break may not only refresh and rejuvenate us, it may also open us up to new sources of inspiration and different ways of looking at the world—or at that assignment.



## HEALTH MATTERS

Katie D'Souza



## Time for Bed

***This article originally appeared September 30, 2011, in issue 1937.***

*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, the body undergoes 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 help 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 reduce those stress levels by reducing cortisol.

According to Harvard Medical School's Sleep Division, lack of sleep causes a variety of negative symptoms: irritability, mood swings, and a feeling of being "on edge," for example. Additionally, insufficient sleep can hamper judgment and learning ability, causing 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. 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 put your brain and body into 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, or 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 with your natural health care provider about 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.*

## THE MINDFUL BARD

Wanda Waterman



The Mindful Bard enjoying the handmade *cuica* drum.

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

*This column originally appeared December 2, 2011, in issue 1946.*

*"Happy New Year! The Conjunto Roque Moreira wishes you peace, health, happiness, success, and we hope in 2011 we can go to Canada to show our work to this wonderful country . . . We have news! We begin to record our new CD in January. Cheers!"*

Anderson Almeida, drummer and vocalist for Conjunto Roque Moreira, in a message to Wanda Waterman on New Year's Day, 2011

### The *Cuica* Story, or How a Handmade Brazilian Drum Found Its Way to My Doorstep in New Hampshire

Think of this as a kind of Mindful Bard side trip. It's not my typical ramble on why this or that film, book, or CD might inspire your next oeuvre, but it's a story that involves a little of each—and which, but for the Mindful Bard, might never have come about.

It started when I discovered a Brazilian rock band called Conjunto Roque Moreira. They were a highly rousing bunch, and their music was a combination of indigenous sounds and Brazilian rhythms. To this they often added elements of reggae, tango, jazz, blues, and any genre or sound that happened to tickle the ears of these highly creative and aesthetically curious musicians.

I decided to get in touch. They sent me their CD, *Sintonia da Mata*, which I readily recommended in this column. Soon after that we did an email interview—a singular mission considering their partial lack of English and my complete lack of Portuguese.

I was impressed enough by their music. But what really blew me away was something else: Conjunto Roque Moreira had founded Fábrica Roque Moreira, an organization that designs musical instruments which underprivileged children can make from natural and recycled materials. The kids can then sell the instruments and help support themselves. Here was a band that was deeply motivated as much by a passion for humanity as by a peculiarly Brazilian sense of fun.

In other words, it was the perfect Mindful Bard match.

Not long after the interview the band asked me if I could help them come to Canada to perform. Although first I sent them the contact information of a good tour manager and various world, jazz, and folk festivals that I thought would be glad to nab the group, I later remembered Ali Hancharyk, whom I had just



interviewed. Ali and his cohorts had developed Home Routes, a highly innovative model of touring that was relatively low stress, highly enjoyable for all concerned, and a system that actually permitted musicians to come home with money in their pockets. It sounded like a good fit.

Home Routes involves a network of private homes where musicians perform. The hosts feed and house the musicians overnight and provide a small concert space where they invite friends, family, and neighbours to come over and spend around \$15 on a small live concert. The hosts take away nothing but the pleasure of hosting professional musicians for a night.

This model worked so well that some musicians were reporting making half their year's income in one short tour, and the system has now spread to other parts of Canada.

I encouraged Anderson Almeida to get in touch with Ali in the hopes that they might be able to work together. To my surprise, the process zipped right through, and Conjunto was booked for a Home Routes tour. Just as I had expected, Canada loved them.

As a thank-you gift the band sent me a *cuica* (Portuguese for "opossum"), a drum used in samba. YouTube the instrument and you'll recognize its sound if you've listened to samba at all. It's played by rubbing a wet cloth along a rod centred inside the drum and rooted in the drum's sheepskin head.

Arnaldo Oliveira tells me that the body of the drum is made from "a creeping plant that [grows] in the sandy soils." The plant," he adds, "is often used is to carry water for consumption . . . [and as] food dishes for people working in the field." It's also used to make other instruments, like the *caxixi* and *shekere*.

Of my drum Arnaldo says, "It's the first instrument made by Fábrica . . . We are already designing it for various people and places, but you're the first to have an international instrument."

And this note from the band toward the end of their tour: "We are now leaving and going to North Battleford in Saskatchewan, Prince Albert . . . the next day we go to La Ronge . . . [we] finish our last show day 8 November, [but] we'll be in Winnipeg until after . . . Nov. 24 . . . *Obrigado* and happiness."

Last night I played the *cuica* at our Friday night musical gathering in Whitefield, New Hampshire.

It's been a good week. A very good week. *Obrigado* and happiness.



The interior of a *cuica* drum.

Wanda also penned the poems for the artist book *They Tell My Tale to Children Now to Help Them to be Good*, a collection of meditations on fairy tales, illustrated by artist Susan Malmstrom.



*From  
Where  
I Sit*

*Hazel Anaka*

## **A State of Mind**

***This column originally appeared September 16, 2011, in issue 1935.***

Despite the date (September 7) and the crazy cool, wet summer we've had, I just cut some roses in my garden. The scarlet blossom with velvety petals is the stuff of Valentine's Day ads. The pink ones are the floribunda style typical of hardy Zone 2 shrub roses: flatter profile, fewer petals, and more loosely wrapped than a florist's rose from Ecuador.

Also tucked into the small white vase are two buds from a resilient and very prickly little shrub rose that has spread in the garden and is growing in the crevices around the pavers. The leaves are chartreuse and the scent is heady. This beautiful, aromatic addition to my desk reminds me of the small joys. Last week it was the Stargazer lilies that perfumed the entire house.

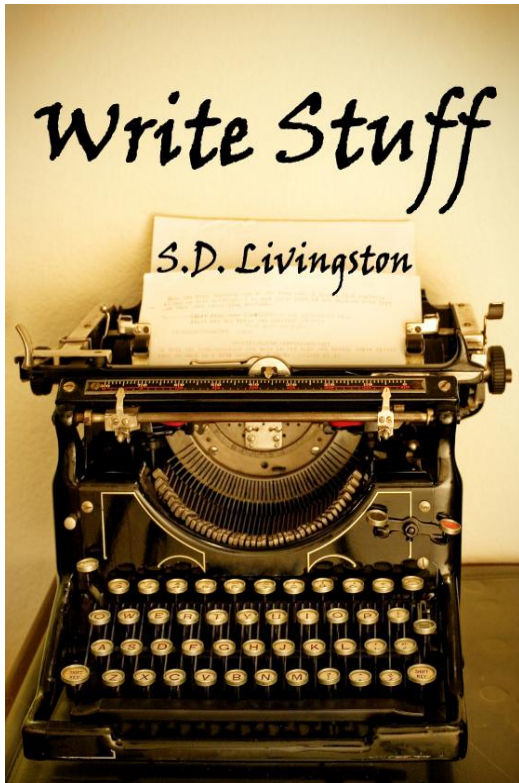
This whole day is a lesson in mindfulness. I wish we were harvesting the crops and getting them in from the field and closer to the bank account. It's very difficult for this farmer's wife to feel the hot sun on her face and be cutting roses when she'd rather be rumbling up and down the fields, operating one of the combines. But when I'm getting anxious about harvest not starting, it's important that I stop and chill.

I've been popping in and out of the house today, taking photos of the work happening outside. Two Mennonite workers are adding a hopper bottom and aeration unit to one of our old grain bins. It involves the use of a crane to lift the bin, remove the rotted wooden floor, and add another ring of steel to the bottom before finally positioning it atop the hopper stand. Then it will be moved by crane to its rightful place in the row of 11 bins.

I wish two-year-old Grady was here to see all this manly machinery-type action. Because he's not, I'm taking photos. I will, in great animated detail, show him the pictures and tell him the story next time he visits. And there is more action to come. In the next few days, four grain bins, including a huge 5,800-bushel one, will be moved the two miles from the neighbour's to our yard. That will be a sight. Each one will be picked up and laid down on its side for transport. The local power company has already measured the height of the overhead lines and determined that no escort is required. Thank goodness for fewer complications.

So today I practice (pretend?) being patient. I look at the four adolescent cats and wonder why their long-suffering but awesome mother hasn't weaned them yet. She has not even taught them to hunt for themselves, so it's time for some tough love. With a visiting tom, before long she will be pregnant again.

I pluck a whirlybird samara from the maple tree in the yard and remember my youth; one more thing to share with my city grandson, a.k.a. "The Sponge." Not combining? It's all a state of mind, from where I sit.



## Digital Dinosaurs

*This column first appeared July 29, 2011, in issue 1928.*

The Rosetta Stone, discovered in Egypt, affords a glimpse of ancient kings and laws. In Scotland, the fragile pages of an 11<sup>th</sup>-century book bring the past to life through words and vivid illustrations. It's astonishing to think of how much we've learned thanks to the knowledge preserved in these and other works. But with modern records being saved in more ethereal forms, there's a danger they could be lost forever. In fact, our own recorded history could be destined for extinction, the equivalent of a digital dinosaur.

The problem is known as digital decay, and it brings a whole new set of challenges to preserving words and images. The usual worries still exist, of course. Paper has always been susceptible to water damage, light, and insects. Stone tablets, and even the stories captured on clay pots, can be destroyed by war or

vandalism, or fractured beyond repair. Sand and wind can wear away a culture's history carved on stela. But the degradation that affects those media comes from outside forces. If protected, the paper and stone records of human history can last indefinitely—or at least for several millennia. Not so with the digital storehouses of our lives.

With digital storage, external forces aren't the main problem. It's the digital media themselves that are cause for concern.

The first problem is their physical form. Far from being evanescent signals flying through space, our bits and bytes have physical substance. They're minuscule but they're there, "electrons moving through circuits, or photons in a fibre-optic pipe," as this *Telegraph* [article](#) explains. And this means that, along with the usual problems of water damage or war, the electrons and photons that make up your CD of holiday photos are subject to entropy and decay.

Say you've created a digital family tree, making diagrams and typing everything you know about your great-great-grandfather, a heroic mountain climber. You want to pass it down for generations to come, so you mail everyone a copy on DVD. According to some [estimates](#) you'd be better off preserving that fascinating tale on paper, since the average lifespan of a commercial DVD is only 50 years. That's not much when you're talking about preserving your family's cultural heritage, especially when compared to the longevity of older methods, like jotting births and deaths in the front of the family Bible. Even if only one person has the original, a photocopy of that record could be shared—and would probably last longer than a standard DVD.

The paradox is that, barring external destruction, newer media have much shorter lifespans than older archives, as an interesting table in *American Scientist* shows. Pigment on paper (invented 3500 BC) lasts over two thousand years. Magnetic tape (invented 1928) lasts decades. But the relatively newfangled (1990) polycarbonate optical WORM disc? Five to twenty years. That's it.

***"[I]t's not enough to simply preserve the records themselves. We need to preserve the tools required to read, hear, or see them . . . [and] you know how quickly formats become obsolete."***

And while governments and corporations may be using archival-quality digital and tape storage, that's no guarantee against loss. In 2010, the Virginia Department of Motor Vehicles lost as many as 16,000 drivers' photos after a computer crash disrupted operations at the DMV for more than a week. The hardware failure corrupted data at 26 state agencies. Tape backups allowed most of the DMV's data to be recovered, but those thousands of photos were permanently deleted.

The second issue is that it's not enough to simply preserve the records themselves. We need to preserve the tools required to read, hear, or see them. If you've got a stack of unreadable three-and-a-half inch floppies tucked away in a drawer, you know how quickly formats become obsolete. Software and hardware companies go out of business and proprietary formats can be unreadable on competitors' brands, meaning data must always be migrated onto the latest storage tools. The pace of technological change almost guarantees that, unlike the Dead Sea Scrolls, archives of today's headline news won't be readable in two thousand years. Not unless government agencies with layer upon layer of archived formats decide to convert them for public use.

Which brings us to another worrisome development for sharing our modern history: cloud computing. The concept is great. Instead of storing (and backing up) all your documents, photos, and music on your own computer, you simply store them in the cloud, letting remote computers preserve your stuff. You don't even need to install software programs anymore; just log in to a web-based service that hosts all the software you use.

The problem, as far as preserving books and music goes, is that centralized storage means fewer copies. When Bing Crosby recorded "White Christmas" back in the 1940s, it went on to sell close to 50 million copies. Paperbacks and hardcovers of Dan Brown's *The Da Vinci Code* can be found on millions of bookshelves around the world. But shifting to the cloud means that we're also embracing streaming instead of downloading, and that could have serious repercussions for things like censorship and access to information.





For instance, what will future generations know of us if publishers or corporations can alter news archives and no original versions (either paper or digital) exist to contradict those edits? If all of us read *Huck Finn* in the cloud, would the sanitized version come to be the only one available?

In this age of information overload, with so much data available instantly, the idea of losing our cultural records might seem fanciful. But at least one group, The Long Now Foundation, takes it seriously. One of their many fascinating creations is the Rosetta Project, which includes a “three inch diameter nickel disk with nearly 14,000 pages of information microscopically etched onto its surface.” Besides being an aesthetically beautiful item, the disk acts as a “decoder key” for a growing, long-term archive of literature, technology, medicine, and more. Future generations will only need a magnifying glass and the naked eye to read it.

There’s much to love about this new digital world, and much to appreciate in the joys of e-books and the Internet. But if we embrace it unwisely, too much and too soon, those MP3s and DVD backups could turn into nothing more than digital dinosaur bones.

*S.D. Livingston is the author of several books, including the new suspense novel Kings of Providence. Visit her [website](#) for information on her writing (and for more musings on the literary world!).*

---

## AUSU UPDATE

**Bethany Tynes, President**



### AUSU congratulates new party leaders!

AU students are spread all over Canada and the world, but AU’s funding comes from the Government of Alberta, so it’s important for us, as AU students, to remain aware of political issues in Alberta. Alberta’s political parties have recently undergone some transitions, as both the Progressive Conservative and Liberal parties recently elected new leaders: Dr. Raj Sherman will now head up the Liberal party, while Alison Redford has been selected to lead the Progressive Conservatives. Redford was sworn in as Premier of Alberta on Friday, October 7. AUSU would like to thank all those who participated in the leadership races, and congratulate Sherman and Redford on their wins.

### Councillors training to serve you better

All eight current AUSU councillors, as well as our two full-time student service staff, are currently involved in a Certified Student Leader training program through the National Centre for Student Leadership. This training covers critical issues such as successful communication, strategic planning, and conflict

resolution, which we hope will better equip us to work productively together to serve the needs of our student members.

### **Increased student representation at AU**

At most Alberta universities, two of the highest decision-making bodies are the Board of Governors, which provides strategic direction, and the General Faculties Council, which deals with academic matters. At AU, meanwhile, there has always been a Governing Council and an Academic Council—until recently! The Alberta Minister of Advanced Education and Technology has amended the Athabasca University regulations, moving AU closer into line with other Alberta universities. AU's Governing Council has now been replaced by a Board of Governors, and while this is mostly a change in nomenclature, the transformation as AU moves from an Academic Council (AUAC) to a General Faculties Council (AUGFC) will be more noticeable. AUSU is particularly pleased that undergraduate students at AU will now have two seats on AUGFC, as opposed to only one on AUAC. There will also be a reserved space on the GFC Executive Committee for an undergraduate student representative. This is great news, and will allow us, as undergraduate students, to ensure that our voice is heard within this important decision-making body at AU!

### **What are your course materials preferences?**

AU is currently re-examining their course materials model. Currently, the cost of all undergraduate courses includes access to the necessary textbooks, and these are usually mailed directly to your door. This is convenient for many students, but many others have asked for the opportunity to look for bargains elsewhere, or to buy and sell used textbooks. What about you? How do you feel about the course materials system at AU? AU is asking students for their opinion! The question currently being posed to students is as follows:

In response to student feedback, AU is considering changing the way in which students access or receive their learning resources. Currently, all the learning resources costs are covered through tuition fees and the learning resources fee. These costs include textbooks, printed materials, access to the LMS and other digital resources, copyright fees for third party materials, and the administrative costs associated with the production of such materials. For items that a student could purchase directly from a source other than AU (e.g., books, e-books), which of the following options would you prefer?

- To purchase materials directly from a non-Athabasca University source such as Amazon
- To have the choice to purchase course materials from either AU or a different source such as Amazon
- To purchase course materials from AU but have the learning resources fee reflect the actual cost of the materials for the particular course (for example, if the learning resources in Course A cost \$100, then the learning resources fee would be \$100)

- The status quo (a fixed learning services fee per course –currently about \$170)

Email us your thoughts and we'll make sure that they're voiced in the appropriate committee!

### **AU honorary doctorates**

Did you know that AU bestows honorary doctorates each year at Convocation? Do you have an idea for someone you'd like to see honoured by the university? Candidates should "have distinguished themselves in education, science, the arts, public service, or other areas, and have made significant life-long contributions to endeavours consistent with the mandate and purpose of Athabasca University." AUSU has a seat on the committee that nominates and selects the recipients of honorary doctorates, so to have your voice heard, drop us an email with your thoughts!

### **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!

. . . about our SmartDraw program? We've been arranging for a licence 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.

. . . there's a new AUSU website on the way? 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.

. . . AUSU has scholarships, awards, and bursaries for our student members? The next major awards deadline is November 1, but some bursaries are also available year-round. Make sure you check our site for more information!

### **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 at president@ausu.org. You can also email our office at 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.*

---

# CLASSIFIEDS

---

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

## THE VOICE

---

1213, 10011 109th St. NW, Edmonton, AB T5J 3S8 - Ph: 800.788.9041 ext. 2905 - Fax: 780.497.7003 attn: Voice Editor

**Publisher** Athabasca University Students' Union  
**Editor-In-Chief** Tamra Ross  
**Managing Editor** Christina M. Frey

**Regular Columnists** Hazel Anaka, Katie D'Souza, S.D. Livingston, Wanda Waterman

---

[www.voicemagazine.org](http://www.voicemagazine.org)

---

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

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

To receive a weekly email announcing each issue, subscribe [here](#). *The Voice* does not share its subscriber list.