

THE VOICE

MAGAZINE

Vol 20 Iss 02 2012-01-13

Changes Ahead?

Goals, intentions, resolutions

Ten Easy Ways

Lists and immortality

Cry of Stone

Hurt, healing, and art

*Plus: Course Exam
Write Stuff
The Mindful Bard
and much more!*

*And don't miss our continuing
20th anniversary coverage!*



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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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



20 YEARS OF NEWS AND VIEWS: A VOICE INTROSPECTIVE

Christina M. Frey



The first issue of what is now *The Voice Magazine* was published in spring 1993.

2012 is a big anniversary for *The Voice Magazine*: we're in our 20th year of publication! To commemorate this milestone, we'll be celebrating all year with special content that gives glimpses into our past, outlines some of our history, and showcases some of our highlights.

This week we'll go all the way back 20 years, to the very first *Voice* issue. Published in the spring of 1993, it had a very different look, feel—and medium!—than the current format. Five things you never knew about *The Voice's* first years:

- *The Voice Magazine* arose out of a project of the Athabasca University Students' Association (AUSA), the forerunner of AUSU. Newly-elected AUSA president Mike Ryan wrote in the first issue that his "first priority" was to "communicate with . . . fellow students." Publishing the newspaper would be "one of the mechanisms" for students to be heard, facilitating communications between students and their student association.
- Early issues were formatted newspaper-style—and printed in paper copy, then mailed to all AUSU members. *The Voice* did not move over to its current online format until many years later.

- It was intended to be the voice of the students, but initially it wasn't called *The Voice*. Simply labelled *The Paper*, its first issue advertised the "AUSA Name the Newspaper Contest" and solicited student suggestions. The winning name was selected by the editorial committee later that summer.
- *The Voice* published just two issues in its first year, gradually moving to three, four, six, and eight annually. It wasn't until midway through 2000 that issues started appearing weekly.
- Content in the first issues was very different than what you'll find in a typical *Voice* issue today. The premiere issue focussed on AU news and student-specific issues, and contained material from AUSA councillors and AU staff. Gradually the focus shifted to a broader sense of what interests the AU student.

Want to take a look at a piece of history—and read the very first *Voice* issue for yourselves? It's available [here](#). And more is on its way: soon we'll be uploading additional archives to the website so that you can get a real sense of *The Voice's* growth throughout the past two decades.

LIST IT!

Christine Purfield



One of my favourite things to do while standing in line at the grocery store is to browse the various magazines at the checkout counter. It's the self-help articles that fascinate me: "10 Ways to Lose 10 Pounds." "15 Ways to Keep Him Happy." "20 Steps to a Healthier You." "12 Ways to Declutter Your Life." And, my personal favourite, "5 Ways to Spend a Billion Dollars." I can't wait to use that one.

You'll notice that they're all lists.

Numbers on a list have advantages. They present information in bite-sized forms for us people with short attention spans. They hook us in and give us the feeling that there are actually *only* 10 ways to lose that extra 10 pounds, and who can't do just 10 things? Well, me, to be honest, but that's beside the point.

I've always wondered why we like lists so much. We not only read them, but make them: the to-do-lists, the shopping lists, lists of places we'd like to go, books we want to read, and movies we need to see. If you'll forgive the expression, the list goes on.

My lists are usually of the to-do type and are generally written like commands: "Do not forget flea stuff for dog!" which of course I always do until about three days after the due date. I figure that if I'm consistently three days late, then really I'm on time.

"Finish that client's bookkeeping!!" screams another item on the list, obviously written by my logical left hemisphere. "Why?" questions her sister to the right, "the meeting's not for another week, isn't it?" Despite my best intentions, another list bites the dust.

I started looking at lists differently when I came across a *Der Spiegel* [interview](#) with Italian philosopher and author Umberto Eco. Eco suggests that "[we] like lists because we don't want to die."

He goes on to explain. "The list is the origin of culture," Eco continues. "What does culture want? To make infinity comprehensible . . . And how, as a human being, does one face infinity? How does one attempt to grasp the incomprehensible? Through lists."

I had always thought that I made lists because—as someone once pointed out to me—I was a bit uptight. Now I can proudly say that it's because I'm attempting to comprehend infinity and grasp the incomprehensible. I've always liked Umberto Eco.

But back to the checkout counter. If you look closely you'll see that it's generally women's magazines that favour lists. The subjects tend to be ones that the magazine editors figure are near and dear to our hearts: weight loss, making our loved ones happy, weight loss, getting the kids to eat green things, weight loss, succeeding at work, weight loss, and stress management, which is needed if we are to lose weight while being good at all the other stuff.

If you think about it, we were conditioned from childhood to work with and make lists. Think of the fairy tales. Once you get past the cutting off of heads, the boiling of children, and the cannibalism, you will notice that everything happens according to a list. The hero always has a list of tasks to perform, the heroine has a list of balls to attend, and the wicked wolf is keen to check off the list of pigs and little girls with grannies.

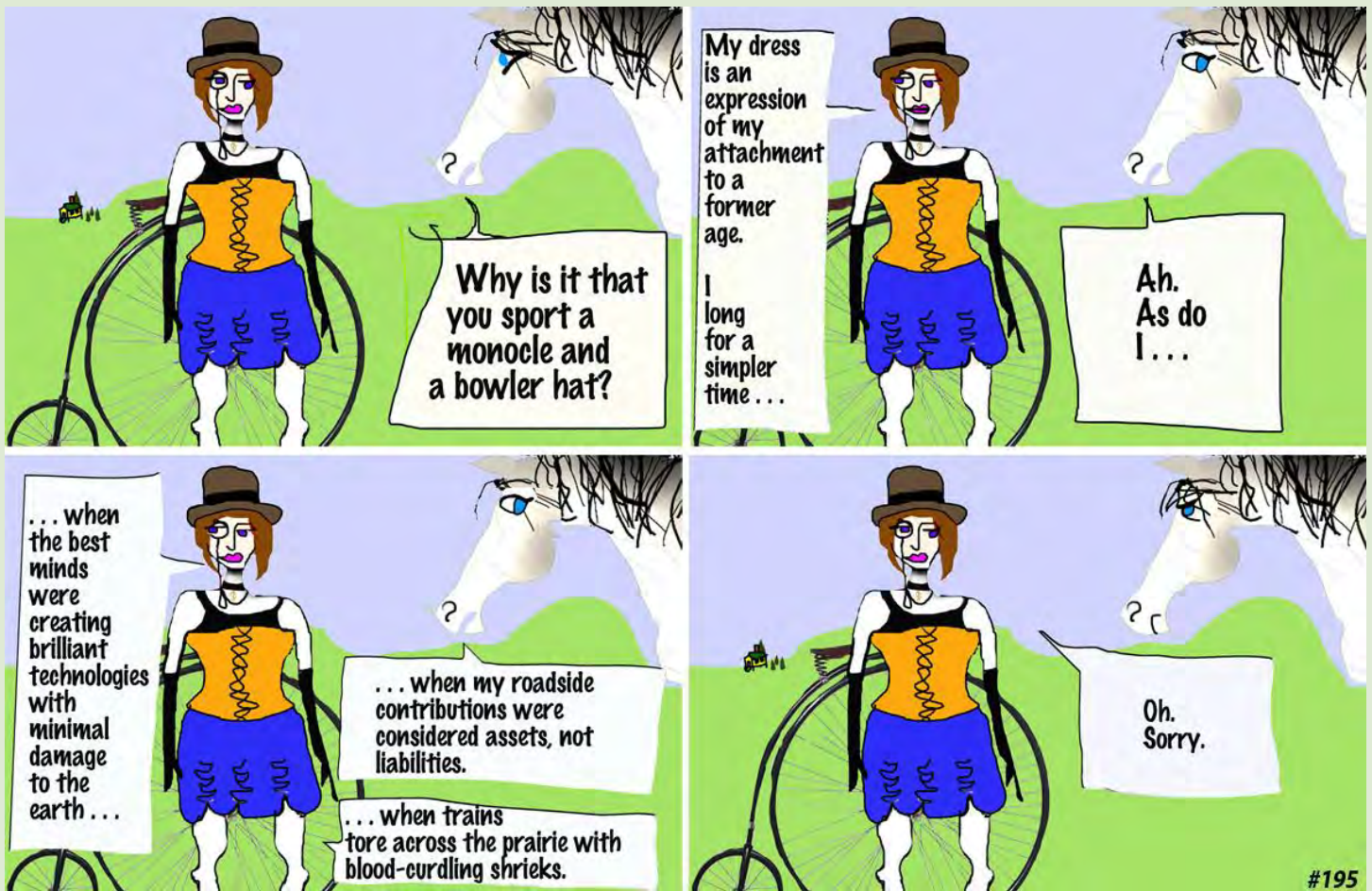
It overflowed into real life, too. When my mother wanted me to do something, she never just told me to do one thing. It was a list: "Go over to your Auntie Peg's house and tell her I'll be by later. Stop off at the butcher's on the way back and pick up some bacon. Pay the newsagent. And buy a bag of wine gums while you're there. Now repeat the list of what you have to do." I could recite it all perfectly in the moment, but my mother knew that either the butcher or the newsagent would get missed. Probably the butcher, because I liked wine gums.

The women's magazine editors are obviously onto something: reel them in with a list. We can't resist it. Because the great thing about lists is that they're infinite—finish with one and you're ready for another.

Umberto Eco is right. This is culture.

CHRONICLES OF CRUISCIN LAN

Wanda Waterman



IN CONVERSATION WITH . . .

Wanda Waterman

***Blackstone, Part I***

Blackstone is a Gemini award-winning Canadian television series based on a fictitious Canadian First Nations reserve. It airs on the Aboriginal People's Television Network (APTN) and hosts a shining roster of some of the best aboriginal actors in North America. The second season premiered on Wednesday night, revealing to fans the cause and outcome of the cliffhanger at the end of Season 1.

Blackstone is part of the recent trend to portray the realities of reserve life and the heroic struggles of First Nations peoples to overcome personal demons and the after-effects of colonialism. New cast member Georgina Lightning is an accomplished writer, director, and actress as well as a committed advocate for native North Americans. Recently she took the time to answer some of Wanda Waterman's questions about the show, her personal struggles, and her Blackstone character Tracey Bull, a woman of intense passion and formidable inner strength.

"Blackstone gets under your skin; it makes you think, feel and want more."

Ron E. Scott, Executive Producer, Writer and Director of *Blackstone*

Georgina Lightning: On Playing Tracey Bull

In the last scene of the final episode of *Blackstone's* first season, a couple is doing the dirty in a strip club dressing room. A door opens and closes. We hear a gunshot. The end.

Sex and violence are no big surprises here, considering that most of the first season addressed a struggle to survive in a system which, if not commanding corruption, at least habituated people to it to the point where they came to accept it as the norm. And so the community of *Blackstone* is home to alcoholism, domestic abuse, contaminated water, gambling casinos, crooked band leaders, lies, manipulation, intimidation, and intrigue.

A far cry from the serenely wise hippy eco-utopia portrayals by non-natives in film and television since the dawn of reels, *Blackstone* is unfortunately representative of life on many reserves now. At the same time it manifests a kind of microcosm of the universal dynamics of power and control.

"It's just presenting the reality, which is very, very harsh," says Georgina Lightning. "Ron E. Scott—he's Native American, he's part of our community—wrote *Blackstone* and directed it, taking his own experience, what he knows, and putting it down on paper and on the screen. In the past we weren't

empowered to do that. Non-natives told our stories and interpreted them; now we're taking ownership of our own identity."

Asked if she identifies with Tracey, Georgina says with assurance, "Yes, I do. I had many problems growing up. And I married my father." She smiles sardonically.

"The role of Tracey has been my most rewarding as an actress . . . because of the levels in which Tracy goes, the emotional reality. There's a lot of range in there. In some places they want you to play a stoic Indian. They tell you where to stand and what to do and when to turn your head, and it's like being a puppet. But Ron just kept the camera rolling and allowed me to express myself. It's going to be really interesting to see what choices he made in my performances to manufacture the character."

Her father's suicide when she was just 18 catapulted Georgina into a journey that was to be self-destructive before it could become redemptive. Eventually a crisis counsellor convinced her she needed support to end the abuse in her life, but it was a long time before she could admit even to herself the extent of the damage that had been done to her.

"I never thought I would go, but I'd had a really severe beating with coat hangers and I couldn't move. That word had been planted in my head—abuse. I called the counsellor up and joined the support group."

"Like me, they all had bruises and stuff like that," says Georgina of the other women in the group, "but I was still so stuck in denial I was like, *I don't know what you're talking about. It's not me—I'm not an abused woman.* It took about five visits with all the women talking about their stories before I even actually said a word."

What was the catalyst that led her to seek healing? A rather rude wake-up call: "I was taking courses. One day I went to school and the business instructor completely called me up. She said no one would ever take me seriously with a black eye and a fat lip—people just don't respect that. They won't take you seriously as a businesswoman."

"I was so humiliated! I was like, *How dare you!* But that was what got me started. Once I opened my mouth and said something about the abuse, I never stopped. I got addicted to healing. I couldn't get enough. I wanted to go every single day. You just feel lighter and lighter as



L-R: Georgina Lightning (actor), Michelle Thrush (actor), and Miika Whiskey Jack (actor).
Photo by: Dean Buscher.

you continue to get all of this stuff out of you. So I really thank my business instructor for humiliating me that day. It really saved my life.”

This story of abuse, denial, awakening, and healing is a common one among First Nations peoples and may in fact be the impetus behind the First Nations cultural renaissance of which *Blackstone* forms a part. The decision to make the leap that leads to health and wholeness seems to engage the creative process like nothing else.

Georgina has passed this love of artistic achievement to her three children, who are actors too. Her daughter is also starting to record. “My kids are creative,” Georgina says. “Definitely. All three of them are artists in many different ways.”

The pain of the past might also be why for women like Georgina, art is not separate from social consciousness.

“I never set out to be a social activist. I wanted to be an actress. But as an actress I created a platform from which I could speak my mind, and the questions that were imposed on me were issues in our community. It wasn’t my intention—it just happened.”

(To be continued.)

DID YOU KNOW?

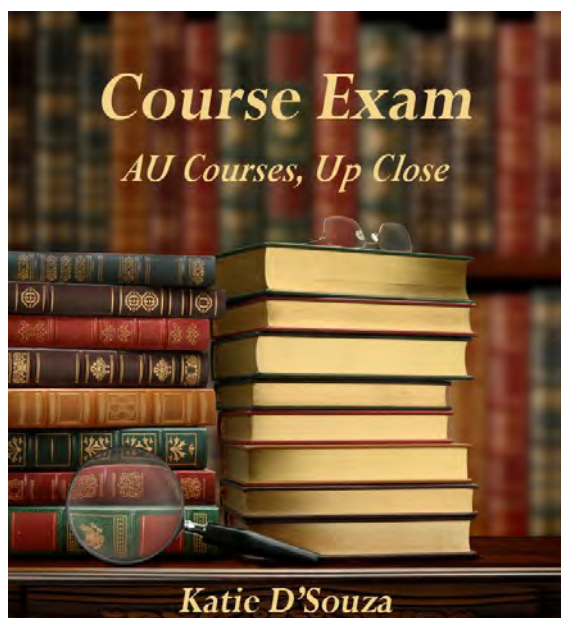
LibriVox



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.



PSYC 465 (Psychology of Sustainability)

Environmental sustainability is a hot topic these days. We seem hooked on the insatiable use of non-renewable resources; our planet is in jeopardy, and our daily habits predict a dire future. Amid increasing media coverage of sustainable living, Athabasca University's Centre for Psychology has released the timely PSYC 465, Psychology of Sustainability. The course gives students the opportunity to explore the sustainable lifestyle from a psychology-oriented standpoint.

PSYC 465, a nine-unit course, focuses on the "psychological research and theory relevant to the problems of inducing people to live and work so that our planet remains viable for future generations," explains course professor Lyle Grant.

Although PSYC 465 is an eclectic course, using information and interpretations from all branches of psychology, Dr. Grant notes that it draws heavily from the social psychology and behavioural analysis fields (due to the abundance of relevant resources and studies in these areas). However, humanistic psychology, developmental psychology and the psychology of environmental stress and restoration are "also given coverage, each with a separate unit," he says.

The course materials are united by a common thread: the "why" of human attitudes and behaviours toward our ecosystem. As Dr. Grant explains, "[in] degrading the environment and depleting our natural resources, we are failing to exert self-control over our own behaviour."

Student evaluation in PSYC 465 consists of four assignment types. First, each unit ends with a quiz, with the quizzes totalling 18 per cent of the final grade. The second assignment (10 per cent) is related to information retrieval; its purpose is to "[familiarize] students with the use of online library resources in psychology," Dr. Grant says. For the third assignment, students complete a bibliography (20 per cent).

There is no final exam in PSYC 465. Dr. Grant explains that this choice was deliberate: "Several years ago I chaired the General Education Task Force of the Middle States Accreditation project and I discovered that AU graduates believe their educational experience at AU is valuable and of high quality, with one significant exception: the surveys have consistently shown that the grads believe that AU courses do not prepare them adequately for public speaking." To address this need, the fourth and final assignment in PSYC 465 is a slide presentation which will "give students experience in doing an oral presentation." Dr. Grant hopes that this will spark a similar trend among other AU courses.

Dr. Grant has been part of AU's Centre for Psychology since 1981, currently teaching five AU psychology courses in addition to PSYC 465. He has a special interest in distance education delivery and associated student learning, and has created several online tutorials for AU students.

For more information on PSYC 465 (Psychology of Sustainability), visit the [course website](#).



Apps and Adverbs

Got school-age children? Chances are, their teachers stress the importance of skills like grammar and spelling. After all, reading and writing are still considered two of the basic three Rs, even if most kids can locate an app faster than an adverb. But that focus on conventional literacy could soon shift to a new kind of literacy: the ability to read and write computer code. Are computer skills really the “grammar of the 21st century”?

Yes, if you agree with Ed Vaizey, the UK’s culture minister. In a recent *Guardian* [article](#), Vaizey notes that “Just as we write well and read well, I think that if you have even a basic understanding of computer coding, it will help you understand the structure of your digital life.”

That’s not to say traditional literacy should fall by the wayside, and Vaizey stresses that those skills are still essential. But his call for students to move beyond simply using computers and start learning computer code makes sense in our increasingly digital lives.

To ponder this very modern proposition, it helps to look at the roles of traditional literacy. In many cultures, literacy equals power (and always has). These words from Irina Bokova, in a 2010 UNESCO report, refer to women’s literacy, but they also reflect a truth that crosses lines of age and sex: “Literacy gives women a voice—in their families, in political life and on the world stage. It is a first step towards personal freedom and broader prosperity.”

In other words, if a person can read and write, she can pursue an education, apply for higher-paying jobs, understand contracts, and figure out instructions for everything from prescriptions to her Netflix account.

The language used doesn’t have much to do with it. Whether you’re living in Hong Kong or Paris, being able to read and write is a common currency that allows you to navigate in society. And a large part of an individual’s power comes from access to that currency. As *Encyclopædia Britannica Online* puts it, a society’s written language can remain “the possession of an elite,” or “it can be democratized—that is, turned into a possession of ordinary people.”

With bits and bytes driving everything from our smart phones to our cars, the language of computer code is quickly moving from an elite currency to one in which we should have a basic grounding. After all, we’re not all destined to be poets and professors, but every child in North America is expected to be able to read and write. So why not learn the language that so many of our devices—and repair staff—will increasingly speak to us in?

With 35 courses in Athabasca University’s [computer science](#) offerings, along with courses from dozens of other colleges and universities, this could just be the year that Java replaces Spanish on your bucket list.

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!).

THE MINDFUL BARD

Wanda Waterman



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

Book: Michael Riordan, *Our Way to Fight: Peace-work Under Siege in Israel-Palestine* (Between the Lines 2011)

The Creative Passive Resistance of Old Souls

"... the struggle for Palestinian liberation should be led by Palestinians, and Israelis in the resistance movement need to be conscious of this at every level. For example, at demonstrations the soldiers prefer to speak to Israelis . . . So it's important for us to say to soldiers, 'It's not my village, it's not my land, you should be speaking to the Palestinians.'"

Kobi Snitz, Israeli member of Anarchists Against the Wall

On the eve of World War II, a large group of Nazi scientists worked for months on developing a deadly gas whose odour would not frighten prisoners into stampeding, but that would also not make the guards so careless as to get too close and be gassed themselves. It's hard to imagine these scientists heading off to work each day after a nice morning coffee.

How do decent citizens spend months and years consciously and deliberately creating and implementing evil procedures without at some point recoiling in horror?

The huge question that this book poses is how to build justice in an impossible situation, but a question that arises while reading it is how the injustice was built in the first place. The Israel-Palestine conflict has been going on for such a long time and is so conscious, deliberate, callous, blind, and self-righteous that it boggles even the jaded postmodern mind. In a world where at least some people have a moral compass, how do injustice machines get built and how do they manage to keep going? And once they're up, how can they be dismantled?

Because of the Israel-Palestine conflict we're now seeing this universal question writ large and inescapable. Our civilization will be grinding its wheels trying to move forward on environmental or economic or technological fronts if it can't move forward on the peace front, and right now the axis of world peace is the Holy Land.

Even the revolutions in the Middle East bear some sort of correlation with Palestine, the main one being that dictators panting for American military support and funding have been all too eager to support the oppression of the Palestinians. This has enraged Arab citizenry the world over, and has created the mounting tensions we still see erupting.

At the same time, surrounding countries have not always been hospitable to their Palestinian brothers and sisters. Seen as victims bringing their own kind of bad luck with them, the Palestinians are often just as persecuted in the countries where they take refuge, treated like second-class citizens by governments urged to be diplomatic toward Israel by avoiding any appearance of coddling the refugees.

With the support of the world's largest military power, Israel has repeatedly flouted international law in its efforts to secure as much of Palestine as possible. Its actions seem driven by a handful of government and business elites and a large group of zealots fuelled by a stubborn and passionate determination to occupy all of what is believed to be the Holy Land.

But this land is also holy to Palestinians. Many have been killed, many forced to emigrate, and thousands of others are living in Israeli prisons. They are humiliated at roadblocks, their houses are demolished, they're shot and beaten and denied access to ambulances, they are forbidden or prevented from pursuing education and gainful employment, and in practice are guaranteed virtually no rights and freedoms. But still they hang on, persistently refusing to abandon the hope of living in a just society.

Riordan interviewed and spent time with Palestinian olive farmers, bloggers, guides, teachers, journalists, professionals, shantytown refugees, and peace activists—both from Israel and from many other countries. A network of international volunteers is up against the stubborn and fanatical resistance and violence of Zionist colonists, who like to be called the cozier-sounding “settlers” but who are occupying land illegally and usurping the power of the original.

Things are slowly changing. It takes a tremendous push on the part of activists to override the exigencies of free enterprise, but pressures are mounting to the point where doing business with Israel is becoming increasingly disreputable. There is a growing international refusal to patronize Israeli companies that, in the words of Norwegian Minister of Finance Kristin Halvorsen, “directly contribute to violations of international humanitarian law.” The Norwegian ambassador won a scolding from Israel for this, but Norway was not alone.

Riordan gifts us twice. First, he shares a series of anecdotes that enable identification with the victims and activists in the Israel-Palestine conflict. Additionally, he provides us with a mountain of evidence colossal enough to flatten the accumulated pile of propaganda that's been shovelled our way since 1970, when the United States became the main ally of Israel (a country formed when Zionists declared independence in 1948).

“I dream all the time that I’m flying. We are not allowed to fly. To become a pilot [I] would have to go outside the country, and then I wouldn’t be allowed to come back. But when I dream it, it gives me hope . . . In the night you dream about the idea and in the morning it exists. This is why I dream of flying.”

Mohammed Khatib, Palestinian leader of the Popular Committee Against the Wall and Settlements

Our Way to Fight fulfills six of the Mindful Bard’s criteria for books well worth reading: 1) it poses and admirably responds to questions that have a direct bearing on my view of existence; 2) it stimulates my

mind; 3) it inspires an awareness of the sanctity of creation; 4) it displays an engagement with and compassionate response to suffering; 5) it gives me tools of compassion, enabling me to respond with compassion and efficacy to the suffering around me; and 6) it renews my enthusiasm for positive social action.

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.

CLICK OF THE WRIST

Leggo My LEGO

One of the top holiday gifts this year was LEGO sets—and whether the recipient was a child or adult, chances are that you’re still finding tiny bricks in corners and under sofas and behind the drapes. To ease the LEGO-induced frustration, this week’s links look at the history of the popular toy, and give a glimpse of some of the amazing artwork created with the bricks.

Go Girly

LEGO’s recent decision to roll out a line of “girly” LEGO sets—with pink and purple bricks, cafés, and tree houses—unleashed a storm of controversy. Read about it at *Self* magazine.

If You Build It

Some of the best things in life happen when you work outside the box, and this takes on a literal meaning when LEGO brick sets are turned into art. These LEGO sculptures, far and beyond most sets you’ll see in the toy aisles, are fantastic. Scroll down to the article’s comments to see reader contributions as well.

In the Beginning

Did you know that LEGO bricks originated in Denmark but were based on a British prototype of interlocking bricks? That LEGO originally were known as “Automatic Binding Bricks”? That their plastic construction made them initially unpopular? Details are in the brief but informative *mental_floss* history of LEGO.

Modern Times

In case you missed it, enjoy LEGO recreations of 2011’s biggest news stories.

Brick Testament

The Brick Testament—a LEGO retelling of the Bible—is an amazing piece of work. (Note: it’s not all kid-friendly).





From Where I Sit

Hazel Anaka

Sounds Like A Plan

Welcome to 2012! Now that we're a couple of weeks in, are you still filled with hope and promise—or have you decided that it's same old, same old?

Do you do the passive thing, reading through all the year-end summaries? Do you love the annual reminder of 2011's top stories? There is a list for everything, from best books and movies to top celebrity scandals.

One of my favourite lists: in a tradition going back to a New Year's Eve party 37 years ago, Lake Superior State University publishes an annual list of words and phrases to be banished. Do you agree that *amazing* needs to go? How about *baby bump*, *shared sacrifice*, *occupy*, *blowback*, *man cave*, *the new normal*, *pet parent*, *win the future*, *trickieration*, *ginormous*, and *thank you in advance*? Between 800 and 900 words have made the list since 1976.

Or maybe you took a more active run at the new year by making resolutions. You might be one of the minority who actually makes a sustained change. You haven't suffered the bitter taste of failure. You're not cynical. Yet.

Resolutions fall into two neat categories: stop this or start that. Stop smoking, eating trans fats, watching brain-atrophying TV. Start exercising, eating colourful vegetables, helping little old ladies across the street. Stop hating the boss, texting 24-7, driving too fast. Start bringing some numbers down (blood pressure, cholesterol, blood sugar, waist size) and others up (bank balance, books read, hours slept).

I subscribe to many author and marketing blogs through Google Reader. Without exception they all view this as the perfect time to analyze what did and didn't work in 2011. And adjust accordingly. The best plans I've seen (including my own) are specific and measurable.

Maybe it's semantics, but I prefer to call my plans "intentions" rather than resolutions. Too often resolutions are mocked and associated with failure. The word *intention* implies a focused mindfulness. Because I'm still building a social media presence, I've set daily and weekly targets for blogging, tweeting, and commenting. And so far, so good.

But I also know that intentions can be misguided, incomplete, or plain old wrong. Smart cookies know that plans need to be revisited and revised.

This year I suggested a new twist to our family tradition of writing down messages and good wishes to one another. Following the [lululemon manifesto](#) of goal setting, I created a goals sheet for each of us. Everyone took a few minutes to write down at least two goals in each of three categories—personal, health, and business—and to assign a timeline of one, five, or ten years to each goal.

Research suggests that very few people write down their goals, but that those who do so improve their odds of success. Will 2012 be the year you invest time and effort in determining your future? Whether it's a goal, an intention, or a resolution, it sounds like a plan from where I sit.

AUSU JOB POSTING

Chief Returning Officer

The Athabasca University Students' Union (AUSU) represents AU undergraduates and their interests. The Union strives for a fair and accessible election process for members of the Students' Council. To this end, AUSU is seeking a student to fulfill the role of Chief Returning Officer (CRO) for the 2012 AUSU General Elections.



Position Duties and Responsibilities

The CRO's responsibilities, as outlined in AUSU policy, include arranging to receive, collect, and maintain ballots in a secure location, confirming the official vote count, notifying candidates of the results, and conducting the appeal process as required.

The CRO reports to the Executive Director of AUSU and AUSU Students' Council.

Selection Criteria

Applicants must:

- be bondable
- have strong organizational and logistical abilities
- be able to analyze and apply policy to ensure a fair election process
- be proficient with email, attaching documents, and using spreadsheets in Microsoft Excel
- be able to check email once per day and reply to several emails per day throughout the election period
- not run for a position on Council in this election

Remuneration

\$500 stipend at the close of the election and all appeal periods in March 2012.

Application Deadline

January 23, 2012

Apply by email, with resume and cover letter as attachments in Word or PDF format, to ausu@ausu.org.

INTERNATIONAL NEWS DESK



At Home: Healthy Grads

Midway through high school, report cards start really mattering. A poor report can affect your future, while a really good one can work toward securing that coveted spot at a top-tier university. At one New Brunswick high school the 10th-graders are receiving a different kind of report—one which can impact their future far beyond the university years.

As the CBC reports, the medical report cards, “which list blood pressure, cholesterol levels, heart rate, blood sugar levels and body mass index (BMI),” were distributed to sophomore students recently.

The report cards have been the project of school guidance counsellor Don Walker, who has worked with students for decades and noticed “a steady decline in the health of phys-ed students since the early 1980s.” The project team, which includes medical professionals like cardiologists, hopes that catching teens’ health problems early on “could help prevent dangerous and much more expensive health problems in future.”

Last year, 75 per cent of the students “had at least one risk factor for heart disease,” and nearly 10 per cent had four or more. Students who manifest risk factors “will be offered follow-up,” including diet counselling and exercise classes.

Around the World: The Eyes Have It

The eyes have it, it’s said—and when it comes to regenerative power, the expression may just take on a literal meaning.

As the CBC reports, scientists have high hopes for newly-discovered stem cells located at the back of the eye. Researchers believe that the cells “may help fight blindness . . . and repair the damage from age-related macular degeneration, or AMD.” AMD is the “leading cause of vision loss in people over 60.”

The stem cells line the layer behind the retina of the eye, but because they can “be isolated from the fluid surrounding the retina,” they can be accessed from “living people” rather than eye donors.

Scientists are experimenting with the regenerative power of the cells, which they told reporters were “mind-boggling.” In the lab, a tenth of the specimens were able to grow, and further experimentation “caused the cells to differentiate into, or give rise to, a variety of cell types — those that make bone, fat or cartilage.”

AUSU UPDATE: JANUARY 2012**Bethany Tynes, President****Happy Holidays from AUSU!**

As the holiday season draws to a close, we hope you've had a chance to rest and relax with those who are important to you—and maybe even squeeze in a little bit of homework time!

Election Timelines Finalized

As we move into the new year, Council is also very pleased to announce that our 2012 election timelines have been finalized! We'll be hiring a Chief Returning Officer (CRO) in January, and on February 6, a Call for Nominations will be released, giving you all the information you'll need to run for AUSU Council, 2012-2014. Nominations will remain open until February 20, and campaigning will occur between Feb. 21 and March 2. All current students

will be able to vote online March 3-6. Joining AUSU Council is a great way to serve your fellow students, as well as gain valuable leadership experience, so I encourage you to consider running in our upcoming elections. If you don't have time to commit to being on Council yourself, though, you can at least get involved by reading about the candidates and casting an educated ballot.

Awards Policy Changes and Updates

Council has recently reviewed and revised many of our standing policies, and some exciting changes have taken place, particularly in our policy on Scholarships, Awards, and Bursaries. While previously, many of our awards were offered twice yearly, in November and May, we're now going to be offering our awards more often—some will still be offered year-round, while the remainder will be available on a quarterly basis. We hope that this will make sure that more students are eligible, and don't miss out on awards just because of the way their course start and end dates line up with our awards dates. And we've also increased the number of some awards given, as well! You can find all the details [on our website](#).

AGM Dates Coming Soon

Each year, AUSU ensures that an independent third-party auditor is hired to check over the organization's financial records and governance. The auditor's findings are then compiled and submitted to the members—you, our AU undergraduate students—at an annual general meeting. This meeting takes place by teleconference, so you can participate from almost anywhere, and is open to all current members. Members of the AUSU Executive will present updates on the year in review, in addition to the financial

documents. There will also be motions to update a few outdated bylaw and policy points. A date for this year's AGM has not yet been finalized, as we await the final documents from our auditors, but as soon as a date is set, an agenda will be drawn up and posted on our website. Keep your eyes open! We'd love to have you join us!

Have you heard . . .

. . . that our brand new 2012 Student Handbook/Planners are now mailing!? Yes, that's right—they're hot off the press! 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!

. . . 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.

. . . that 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! Email us your thoughts on student textbooks and learning resources, and we'll make sure that they're voiced in the appropriate committee!

. . . about our SmartDraw program? After much discussion, we've decided that this is a valuable service to students, so we've renewed our licenses for 2012! SmartDraw is a software package that allows students to create high-quality charts and graphics, and to insert these into a file type of their choice. 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 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.

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THE VOICE

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