

THE VOICE

MAGAZINE

Vol 20 Iss 13 2012-04-06

Yukon Ho!

The lure of the North

Rise and Shine

Breakfast of champions

Home is Best

A place in the country

*Plus:
In Conversation With
Gregor's Bed
and much more!*



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***The Voice
Magazine***

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

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

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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indicate if we may publish your letter.



THIS WORLD

S.D. Livingston



Yukon Travels

In August 1896, a small party went prospecting on Rabbit Creek, a tributary of the Klondike River. Their discovery that day turned Yukon into a hotbed of gold fever, and stampeders by the thousands poured into the area. Some got rich while others went home empty-handed, and the Yukon still exists in popular imagination as the land of grizzled prospectors. But there's a lot more to the territory than that, as I recently discovered.

In many ways, the long-ago Yukon of gold and glory still exists—and it's alive in a saying I heard countless times during my stay. "Everyone here is from somewhere else" went the refrain, and it echoed the adventurous spirit that brought so many here from far-flung lands.

Not that the locals I met had ventured north in search of gold. In fact, a common theme was that most had only planned to stay in the Yukon temporarily, some for work, others for a holiday. Yet almost without fail they would smile and say they'd fallen in love with the place, and twenty (or five or a dozen) years later they couldn't imagine leaving. Whether they hailed from Ireland or the Philippines or simply another part of Canada, they were part of the surprisingly cosmopolitan feel of this rugged place.

That international flavour was especially visible during the 2012 Arctic Winter Games. The Games are a "celebration of northern sport, culture and friendship," and team jackets from around the globe dotted the streets of Whitehorse, which hosted this year's event. Greenland, Nunavut, Yamal (Russia), Alaska, Nunavik-Quebec—athletes from all these places and more came together to compete at the Games.

And the lure of the Yukon had carried newcomers well beyond the capital of Whitehorse, even though three quarters of the territory's population lives there. One of the highlights of our trip was a little gem called the Kluane Kaffee, an unassuming little spot tucked just off the highway in Haines Junction. The café's owner, Matthias Lexow, hails from Germany and the chef, Jonathon Peterson, trained in Rhode Island. For customers, it's a match made in heaven.

From the moment you step in the door, it's clear you're in for a treat. Fresh-baked organic muffins, flaky croissants, and decadent desserts fill the display, while the sounds of world music stream in



A snow sculpture at the 2012 Arctic Winter Games.

from the Internet (at a volume that's blessedly low enough for normal conversation but loud enough to set the mood).

And the food? An absolute delight, from the organic coffee to the perfect latte to the steak that my companion is still raving about. Even in metropolitan centres it's rare to find the quality of ingredients and the care in preparation that we discovered at the Kluane Kaffee. I'm no foodie, but it's one of the first stops I'll make if I'm in the area again.

For the icing on the cake, though, Kluane National Park tops it all. If you've never heard of it, Kluane lies in the southwest corner of the territory. The official version, on the Parks Canada [website](#), goes like this: Kluane is "an empire of mountains and ice. Here in a vast international preserve, are most of the tallest peaks in North America and the largest icefields outside the polar caps."

The unofficial version defies description. The experience was, quite literally, like driving through a postcard, and the jagged mountain peaks looked as if some giant artist had done a charcoal sketch against the sky.



Surrounded by mountains in Kluane National Park.

If you plan to visit the area, though, I'd recommend going in summer or early fall. Even in mid-March the roads were treacherously icy, and we passed few other travellers on the long stretch between Whitehorse and Fairbanks, Alaska. Definitely not the place to break down—or to run into one of the many sheep or bison that wander onto the road.

Yet for all the grandeur of Yukon there were sad reminders of boom days long past, too; reminders that were visible in the countless vacant hotels and gas stations along the highway. With many stores and attractions closed to await tourist season, we assumed at first that these shuttered buildings would reopen with the spring thaw. But many of them had a noticeably derelict look—nothing a coat of paint was going to fix.

Size matters: Yukon is 483,610 square kilometres and has a population of just over 35,000. Spain, on the other hand, has a population of 47 million in a total area of 505,370 square kilometres.)

After we'd asked, the answer seemed obvious. The Alaska Highway was constructed in the early 1940s by the US Army, in part to protect the Pacific Northwest from invasion during World War II. (This [site](#) even has videos of those early days!) The highway remains a major route between British Columbia and Alaska, cutting through southwest Yukon, so we were surprised that business wasn't booming for restaurants and gas stations.

But if technology's improved the highway since the '40s, it's improved cars, too, and the simple answer is that today's vehicles travel farther and with fewer breakdowns. No need to stop when you're zipping along with your enhanced fuel economy and GPS.

At least one icon of those days is flourishing, though, and if you visit Watson Lake, Yukon, you can add to its story. It's the [Sign Post Forest](#), a colourful forest of—well, signs. Visitors from all over the world add license plates, county signs, and even Frisbees to the posts. Anything that proclaims the place they're from. The Forest started with a lone marker pointing to Danville, Illinois, erected by a homesick young engineer in the US Army.

You could wander for days and not read all the signs, and the park even has some of the original vehicles used to build the Alaska Highway. And if you happen to be visiting in 2042, make sure you're there when they open the time capsule that's been buried since 1992!

These days, most travellers don't go to Yukon with dreams of gold on their mind. But with its modern highways, natural beauty, and thriving capital, it has plenty of treasures to discover.

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!).



A glimpse inside the Sign Post Forest.

IN CONVERSATION WITH . . .

Wanda Waterman

**Ensemble Polaris, Part II**

Ensemble Polaris is a group of musical masters who have banded together to perform and record music from the northern latitudes. According to their website, some of the musical traditions they embrace include “early, folk, Klezmer, Hot Club of Paris, middle Eastern and southeast Asian, traditional Scandinavian, Celtic, Cape Breton, eastern European, classical, improvisatory, and avant-garde.” They’ve just released their fourth album (see the recent [Voice review of Uncharted Waters](#)).

Recently flautist Alison Melville and clarinetist Colin Savage took the time to answer Wanda Waterman’s questions about their musical roots and branches. Read Part I of the interview [here](#).

Early Music

Alison’s early musical influences were rich in quality and manifold of genre. Some of her earliest musical memories include hearing tunes from musicals and oratorios in family singalongs around her aunt’s piano. “As an older kid and teenager I listened to a lot of rock ‘n’ roll on the radio; but I also played Renaissance consort music from the age of 11, woodwind and baroque chamber music throughout my teens, and everything from Bach and Strauss to Sondheim and Gilbert and Sullivan in community orchestras, bands, and musicals. I feel lucky to have had such a smorgasbord of a musical diet!”

Tafelmusik

The baroque orchestra Tafelmusik, where several of the members of Ensemble Polaris work as freelance musicians, is one common ground for many of them. “We had previously met one another doing other projects, “some of them in the early music scene,” Colin says. The willingness to be flexible in playing style and to explore different instrumental sound qualities, common in both the historical performance world and the “New Music” world, has been a very useful attribute in Ensemble Polaris.

Fun with Music

You’d think it would be hard to please musicians with such stimulating backgrounds, but performing with Ensemble Polaris is no snooze. “Speaking for myself,” says Colin, “playing with Ensemble Polaris (along with performing Mozart operas on period instruments) is the most fun I have playing music. The realities of making a living as a musician require that we all do a lot of projects outside the group, but we do set aside several time slots every season for developing new repertoire, concerts, recording, and touring.”

One of the most delightful characteristics of Ensemble Polaris is the group’s serious but playful approach to repertoire. Colin divulges one idea: “a concert of music related to games, including our version of the

Hockey Night in theme (an iconic Canadian TV theme) and a potential Christmas CD, following the success of our 'Not the *Nutcracker*' program last December, which included Russian folk tunes and our rearrangements of Tchaikovsky's ballet music.

"He would have used accordion and hurdy gurdy if he'd thought of it. Who needs a celeste when you've got two mandolins, bass clarinet, and triangle?"

Recalling an Auditory Zenith

When asked about her most moving musical experiences, Alison recalls a concert of South Indian classical music she heard in her teens: "I remember being completely entranced by this music and also by a concert of my teacher years later in Basel, Switzerland. It was the grace and simplicity of both of these that impressed me; there was virtuosity when called for, too, but the focused presence of the more reflective moments was magical. I often think the world could use more of that these days."

On the Horizon

Ensemble Polaris is currently planning a tour of a cluster of northern states in 2013-14, and for next season they hope to collaborate with some Scandinavian-Canadian folk dancers. They're also planning a performance of a new piece written for just for them by Canadian composer Andrew Downing.

DID YOU KNOW?

Google Art Project



Searching for artistic inspiration—or the chance to relax while examining works of art? Whether you prefer the Louvre (Paris), the Museum of Modern Art (New York), or the Museum of Islamic Art (Qatar), there's a world of exploration available right at your fingertips with Google's new [Art Project](#).

And you don't even need to leave your chair.

The Art Project, "a collaboration between Google and . . . art partners from across 40 countries," is a "unique online art experience" that allows users to explore museums, artists, and collections from around the world. Over 30,000 works of art are currently available on the site, including "paintings, drawings, sculptures, historic and religious artefacts, photographs and important manuscripts."

Some of the artwork can be examined "at brushstroke level detail," while other pieces take the form of a virtual tour. You can also enhance your experience with video and audio guides, museum information, educational materials, and viewing notes. Users also have the option to create their own galleries with their favourite pieces from an eclectic group of museums.

In the future, Google Art Project is considering expanding to "showcase how Artists are using new emerging technologies to showcase their Art."

HEALTH MATTERS

Katie D'Souza

**Breakfast: Off to a Good Start**

What does your breakfast look like in the mornings? Is it a carefully prepared meal—or non-existent? Or perhaps it varies, a hurried affair on weekdays but a leisurely one on the weekend. For some of us, giving breakfast the short shrift is a result of a rushed morning. For others, it's a deliberate skip that's part of our weight loss plan.

Whatever your situation, though, it's important to start your day out right with a healthy breakfast. Breakfast essentially “breaks the fast” from your last meal of the night before, giving your body an energy boost when it needs it most. Food in the morning offers your brain adequate glucose for proper functioning; a good, balanced breakfast also gives essential nutrients and protein, the latter of which is important for cellular repair.

To help you give your day the nutritional boost it needs, here are some quick, easy, and healthy breakfast ideas.

Breakfasting well

If you're a fan of cereal for breakfast, steer clear of boxed, sugar-packed cereals. Although at first you'll feel energized with the sugar rush, this energy is temporary, leaving you feeling deflated once you arrive at the office. Instead, opt for fresh-cooked oatmeal porridge or cold cereals and granolas with high fibre content and little or no added sugar. To make porridge more exciting, try adding raisins while cooking, or garnish with chopped almonds and a drizzle of raw honey.

Another light breakfast option is fresh fruit served alongside a protein (like Greek yogurt). Whole grain toast spread with nut butter is a good choice, too.

Or you might choose an egg breakfast; if cooked without a lot of fat or cheese, eggs are indeed healthy. They're an excellent source of protein, and the yolk contains B vitamins. For variations, experiment with different preparations (poached, scrambled, over easy) and sides (toast, cottage cheese, whole grain muffins, or fruit). If you're vegan, consider a tofu scramble, which cooks up quite quickly if you have the add-ins prepared.

In a hurry? If you have a blender or shaker, you can whiz up a healthy shake in two minutes. Add a cup of milk (any type, including almond, soy, or rice), half a banana (fresh or frozen), and a handful of berries. You can also drop in a tablespoon of pre-ground flax seed (although this will thicken your shake if you let it sit too long). Some people like to add powdered multivitamins (available at a health food store), their

Skipping breakfast in favour of saving time or saving calories may have the opposite effect; your metabolism may be lowered, meaning that you'll work less efficiently and burn fewer calories throughout the day.

daily dose of liquid multivitamin, or protein powder. However, be wary of shake mixes that are loaded with extra sugars.

Snack attack

If a light breakfast is your preference, you may experience mid-morning hunger pangs or cravings. Be prepared with a healthy snack so that you don't need to avail yourself of junk food from the vending machine. Yogurt offers a calcium boost and a small shot of protein to help your blood sugar stabilize until lunchtime. Try looking for yogurt that doesn't contain extra ingredients like cornstarch and flavouring; the health benefits of yogurt are derived mostly from the bacterial culture (probiotic) and the milk it's cultured in.

Or give your brain a boost with a handful of nuts; nuts like walnuts and cashews are full of EFAs, the "good fats" you hear so much about. EFAs are also helpful for alleviating dry skin, which is a benefit if your environment is dry. A caution: while nuts are healthy, they are high in calories and should be eaten in moderation. A handful is adequate.

If you're a "crackers and cheese" person, try substituting a piece of crispy flatbread (which contains less fat than crackers and often is made from alternative grains like spelt) topped with almond, cashew, or peanut butter.

But what about the calories?

Concerned about calories? Although skipping breakfast can make you feel in control of your daily calorie count, it's not the ideal for weight loss. In fact, eliminating a key meal like breakfast can put your day off to a sluggish start, meaning that you'll be working less effectively and with less energy all day. In fact, early-morning activities set your metabolism for the rest of the day, so skipping breakfast may actually interfere with your ability to burn calories.

If mornings are sluggish and difficult for you, considering renovating your breakfast and morning snack routine. You may just find a boost to brain power and energy!

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.



GREGOR'S BED

Wanda Waterman



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

Film: Film Socialisme (2011)

Director/Screenwriter: Jean-Luc Godard

Cast: Catherine Tanvier, Christian Sinniger, Jean-Marc Stehlé, Agatha Couture, Eye Haidara, Marie-Christine Bergier

"Globalisation has made us more vulnerable. It creates a world without borders, and makes us painfully aware of the limitations of our present instruments, and of politics, to meet its challenges."

Anna Lindh

"I respectfully decline the invitation to join your hallucination."

Scott Adams

A Rhapsody of the Prosaic in a World of Hyper-Stimuli

A young girl wanders around the ship's deck. She's blindfolded and, holding her hands out before her, she feels her way through the space. She reaches the pool and gently allows herself to fall in. Two men at the slot machines discuss the international flow of money, mentioning Israel and Palestine. Patti Smith, playing herself, wanders among the ship's guests, singing of angst and futility—perhaps the most incongruous cruise ship entertainer you could imagine.

The cruise ship is the ideal metaphor for globalization. People of all nationalities are on board, and their goal is not a resolution to their problems but rather a bourgeois decadent escapism, a means of processing the horror of their reality so as to render it palatable.

The cinematography is disarming: the churning sea is a splendid wall of water and you can observe the thoughts pacing across the lovely faces of those on deck contemplating it. The colours of the cruise ship are garish and industrial, the sights and sounds so vivid you can almost smell the sea breeze.

The route is bizarre; the cruise appears to start in France and to then to visit Egypt, Palestine (where it's not allowed to dock), the Ukraine, Italy, and Spain. Each stop somehow illuminates the origins of European civilization and the current woes while at the same time providing a diversion from them.

Religion is connected to the world of conventional film, thus subjecting it to the same kind of mockery Godard has always reserved for the commercial and traditional aspects of the film industry. A Catholic mass, for example, is held in a monstrous casino. Hollywood, allegedly invented by Jews, is described as the tomb of the prophet; when we view the big screen we face a Mecca and pray toward an unseen Ka'abah.

We are off the ship now, possibly in Spain. A young European girl leans against the gas pumps, rebuffing those who try to speak to her. She's engrossed in a paperback copy of *Illusions Perdu*, by Balzac, a book which tells the story of a young man who prostitutes his creativity for upward mobility and is then castigated on all sides, leading him into even worse acts of betrayal.

The characters' resistance to reality creates a delicious tension. A twisting thread emerges, creating not a commentary on the world we now inhabit but rather a light which shines on a few key formative events, both mythological and historical: Abraham and Isaac, ancient Egypt, Athens, the Crusades, and the Holocaust. The burden of guilt is more than Europe can bear. There remains distraction and depression wrapped in a hideous beauty. Again the world revolves around Palestine; in typical Godard fashion, no side is taken.

Godard has a penchant for breaking moulds imposed by traditional French cinema and by Hollywood, and this alone makes for some charming surprises. Instead of the expected English subtitles, very brief collections of words (usually three) at the bottom of screen provide a restrained verbal dimension indicating the thoughts of the characters. Later, when people start speaking, a very general indication of what the French is saying is given. The dialogue itself is like spoken poetry, cryptic iambic fragments spoken with an air both tragic and blasé.

Old film clips and cultural references are as brief as autumn snowflakes, but effective. "Don't say it, show it," admonishes an androgynous-looking female director within the film, pointing to the limitations of language for expressing reality.

There are countless achingly everyday visual details, like the shade of yellow paint on a garage interior, a young girl's sullen, vacant look, and a little towheaded boy, wielding a stick with the bravado of Quixote, tellingly accompanied by a jazz track.

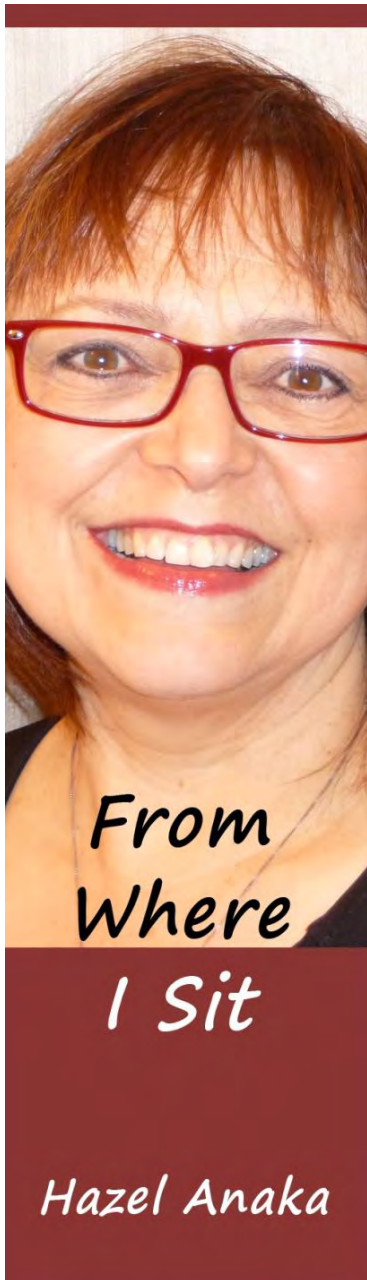
On *The Red Green Show* there was a character named Dalton Humphries who ran a junk store called The Everything Store. The store's typically passive Canadian motto was this: "We got stuff. Maybe buy some."

A similar slogan could be attributed to *Film Socialisme*: "Here it is. Have a look."



Film Socialisme. Credit: Lorber Films.

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.



A Place in the Country

"I live on a farm about an hour and a half away," I said to the Edmonton sales clerk.

"Ahhh, I wish I lived on a farm," was the wistful reply from the 20-something girl. "My dad always said if we won the lottery, we'd buy a farm."

"Well, yeah, it's a pretty good place to live," I conceded. "But when you need anything you need to drive for it."

I suggested she attend the Northlands Farm & Ranch Show that was currently running in the city and try to snag a farmer. "I do love cowboys," she said.

This short exchange was surreal for a couple of reasons. Most farmers I know, us included, hope for a lottery win so we *don't* have to farm anymore. In an old joke, one farmer asks the other what he'd do if he won the lottery. "Farm 'til it was all gone" was the smartass (but accurate) answer.

Secondly, the concept of pinning one's hopes and future on a crapshoot like a lottery seems universal. There are about as many potential dreams simmering as there are people lining up to buy tickets.

Is the price of farmland out of reach? It depends on where it's located and how good the soil is. If the farm dream includes a line of machinery, start-up costs, and annual inputs, then you'd better double up your ticket purchases—it will take millions. If it's just a simple house and land you want, it's cheaper than a modest home on a 35-foot lot in Edmonton.

What stuck with me on the drive home was the whole idea of counting blessings. It's incredibly easy to bitch and moan about our circumstances. It's easy to see the downside, the inconvenience, the missing elements. It's easy

to fall victim to life's-greener-on-the-other-side-of-the-fence—it is and to believe that city life close to services and amenities is the cat's meow. We're so quick to think that someone's, anyone's, *everyone's* life is fuller, richer, and easier.

Logically, I know it isn't true.

Emotionally, I know that pulling into the driveway at home after a day or two or three away is a good feeling. There's always a calming effect as we leave the city limits and harried driving behind us. There's something to be said for sleeping in your own bed, even if it's a queen-sized one in a small room. There's something restorative in seeing the trees and wildlife (even when a deer darts into the grille of your truck). The air is fresher; the space, expansive. It's a tangled mess of ownership, stewardship, responsibility, burden, never-ending work, pride, and pleasure.

Yet even with this reminder to be grateful for the home and life I have, I will continue buying dream home tickets. In fact, earlier this week I toured the Big Brothers/Big Sisters dream home in Sherwood Park and bought 10 tickets. I can see us there. We could always tell our new neighbours about our place in the country, from where I sit.

Hazel Anaka's first novel is *Lucky Dog*. Visit her [website](#) for more information or follow her on Twitter @anakawrites.

CLICK OF THE WRIST

Be Quiet!

Spring break is over, and maybe you're craving the peace and quiet of whatever serene locale you were fortunate enough to visit. Alternatively, maybe you welcomed the chaos of everyday life, which paled in comparison with your loud and busy sightseeing trip or the hectic craziness of the kids being home from school. Take a quiet break and check out these links on silence:

Quietest Place

An anechoic chamber—one in which sound is fully absorbed—is an intriguing and potentially dangerous place. This article includes a fascinating discussion of the anechoic chamber experience, the physics and emotional weight of sound, and how these rooms can affect health care.

Escape

We live in a noisy culture. Even when we're alone we surround ourselves with clamour—whether through our technology or just the constant companionship of music, we've trained ourselves to require noise to function well. This intriguing piece by a young journalist talks about the effect of the culture of noise on our own sense of self-awareness.

Quietube

If you enjoy YouTube but are bothered by the clutter of distractions on the page (comments, suggested viewing, and the like), check out this easy-to-install browser button. Quietube allows you to streamline the use of YouTube, Vimeo, and Viddler. You can even use it to create URLs of the more minimalist viewing experience to share with friends.

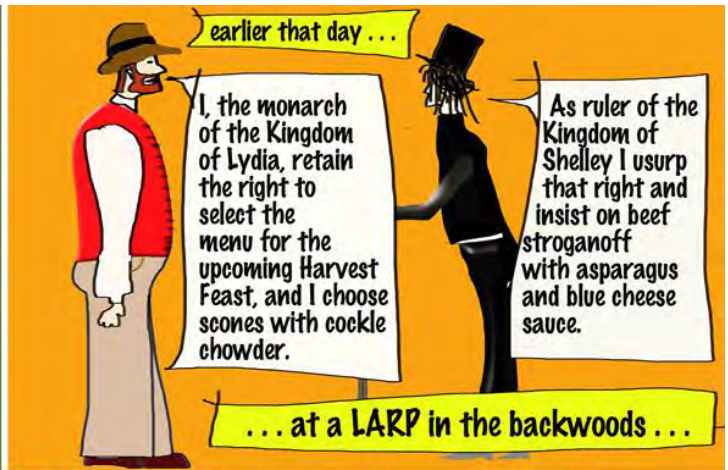


"If I were a physician, and if I were allowed to prescribe just one remedy for all the ills of the modern world, I would prescribe silence. For even if the word of God were proclaimed in the modern world, how could one hear it with so much noise? Therefore, create silence."

Kierkegaard

CHRONICLES OF CRUISCIN LAN

Wanda Waterman



AU NEWS WRITER WANTED!

In order to meet the needs of our student readers, we're ready to expand our coverage of Athabasca University-specific news, events, and resources. We're seeking a regular writer who will research and cover these and other, similar topics on a freelance basis. Columns will be paid at the regular freelance rate.

Interested applicants can send a writing sample to the Managing Editor, Christina Frey, at voice@voicemagazine.org.

To all aspiring writers: remember that *The Voice* is always happy to consider articles on any topic of interest to our readers!



INTERNATIONAL NEWS DESK



At Home: Happy Canadians

How good is your life? If you live in Canada, the odds are high that you're pretty content—so say the authors of a new study.

As *The Globe and Mail* [reports](#), “Canada is the fifth-happiest country in the world, according to a global study on the social and economic well-being of nations.”

Beating out Canada for claims to the best life for its citizens were northern European nations like Denmark, Norway, and the Netherlands. Dissatisfaction with the quality of life was most prevalent in sub-Saharan Africa, including war-torn countries like Sierra Leone. On the whole, most of the world (with the notable exception of

the United States) has grown happier in the past 30 years.

The study took into account factors like wealth, family, job security, relationships, and “political freedom, strong social networks and an absence of corruption.”

Nations are increasingly interested in measuring progress in terms of citizen satisfaction and developing “public policy to boost well-being and reduce misery.” The study was commissioned for the United Nations Conference on Happiness and is the first of its kind.

Around the World: Eclipse of the Forecast

When the sun goes behind the clouds, the air temperature cools slightly—so it makes sense that solar eclipses can affect the ambient temperature in a similar way. But a recent study suggests that whole local weather patterns may be affected when a solar eclipse occurs.

As the *National Geographic* Daily News site [reports](#), “solar eclipses can alter local weather on small scales,” including change in wind speed and direction.

Scientists have long known that an eclipse can “lower temperatures within [the] shadow by as much as 5 degrees Fahrenheit (3 degrees Celsius).” But although change in wind speed and direction have been observed during an eclipse event, the connection hasn't been verified until now.

The study, which examined data from a 1999 eclipse, “used the pre-eclipse conditions and computer modeling to create a forecast for that day that did not account for the eclipse's shadow.” A comparison of the projection and the actual post-eclipse conditions “showed a significant decrease in wind speed of about 1.6 miles (2.5 kilometers) an hour” as well as a clear shift in wind direction toward the south.

AUSU UPDATE: MARCH 2012

Bethany Tynes, President



ELECTION RESULTS!

AUSU Elections were held March 3-6, 2012, and 17 candidates appeared on the ballot. Thank you to all who ran, and all who voted! The nine candidates who have been elected to form the 2012-2014 AUSU Council are: **Wendy Barnard, Bethany Tynes, James Ramsbottom, Evan Schmidt, Ashley Charlton, Toni Fox, Kim Newsome, Jason Nixon, and Craig French.**

Of the nine candidates elected, four are incumbents (James, Toni, Kim, and Bethany), while five are fresh new faces! We'll look forward to sharing more about our new group as time goes on, but for an introduction, here's what they had to say about themselves while still campaigning:

Wendy Barnard: "In 2009 I enrolled in AU's BComm Accounting program, and it was the best decision I ever made. Until that point I had been randomly taking courses at various colleges and universities throughout Toronto, trying to piece together my own BComm. AU made everything simpler. As a part-time student at AU I still have plenty of time to devote to my (almost) husband and challenging teenage boy. I am also able to work full-time in the accounting industry (using what I learn to constantly improve myself) and still have time to do things I enjoy. My main hobbies are knitting and crocheting for charity, reading and reviewing books for my blog, and wrestling with my two German Shepherd "puppies." During my time at Mohawk College in Hamilton I was elected Business Director of their Student Council. It was a great experience and I hope to bring that knowledge to my position with AUSU. My main focus is to create a voice for the student body by interacting with them regularly through social media to learn, and share, their issues and ideas. A fellow student once called me AU proud, and he couldn't be more right!"

Evan Schmidt: "Hello fellow members of AUSU! I'm a part-time student and I live in the town of Vaudreuil-Dorion, located in the outskirts of Montreal. I am currently enrolled in the Certificate of Marketing, and later plan on completing my Bachelor's degree after getting a few more certificates. I've been home-schooled since I was 10, live in a francophone community, am vegetarian, have six dogs, and have been involved with AU and AUSU since I was 14 (I am 20 now), so I really appreciate how Athabasca caters to the uniqueness of each student. Often doing things backwards myself (heck, I got my pilot's license two years before my driver's license!), I realize the importance of making sure that everyone is represented. I volunteer three nights a week with the Air Cadet Program (for teens ages 12-18), so I know what hard work and dedication can accomplish (hence the pilot's license!). I always strive for excellence and make sure that everything counts. That is why I think I would be great on the AUSU Student Council. It would be my honour to represent my fellow students, and a responsibility I would not take lightly!"

Ashley Charlton: “I have been an AU student since September 2009, working on a BA with an English major. I am a stay-at-home parent to my two preschool-aged daughters. My hobbies include long-distance running, playing the saxophone, and snowboarding; I am especially excited to be running my first-ever full marathon this summer. I also enjoy volunteering within my community. For over five years I was a member of the executive for minor soccer and I am now in my third year of acting as the secretary for the non-profit performance band that I play in. My previous involvement in minor sports gave me ample experience in conflict resolution and problem solving, while my experience with my band involves creative fundraising, finding new ways to recruit members, and keeping organized. I feel that these experiences, as well as my enthusiasm for AU and the flexible education opportunities it offers, make me an ideal candidate for a position on AUSU’s student council. During my time at AU I have found the AUSU community to be exceedingly welcoming and supportive and I would love the opportunity to serve this community by continuing the positive atmosphere and providing useful resources for its members.”

Jason Nixon: Jason Nixon lives in Sundre, Alberta and is in AU BComm program (Accounting Major). Jason has a BA Diploma from SAIT which he completed through distance education as well as over 10 years of management experience in both the for-profit industry and lately as an Executive Director of a non-profit agency working with urban underprivileged in a rural setting. Jason is excited about the opportunity to represent his fellow students on the council and if elected will use his experience and skills in management, program development, and distance education to work with council members and the AUSU executive to advance our members’ interests.

Craig French: “Eleven years after graduating with a degree in Computer Engineering and Management from McMaster University, I felt the urge to broaden my academic horizons. I enrolled in a night course at McMaster. However, I found that the structure of a traditional university course was challenging to interweave with my additional responsibilities as a husband, a parent of three young children, and my career as a software engineer. In 2008 I discovered AU. With the flexibility it offered, I learned that I could handle my responsibilities and pursue further education simultaneously. Since then I have been enrolled in the Bachelor of Science program as a part-time student. I have the skills and experience necessary to be an effective member of the AUSU Student Council. I have board experience. I’m currently serving as Vice-Chair of a not-for-profit organization that produces subsidized fresh food boxes. I have a reputation for getting things done. I was voted ‘Executive of the Year’ as Vice-President of the Student Alumni Association of McMaster. By virtue of my profession, I bring deep technical knowledge of Internet and telecommunications technologies. Finally, I have recently received awards for my public speaking skills at Toastmasters. Vote Craig French for great results!”

We look forward to seeing what the new council will be able to accomplish during their term! Congratulations to those elected, and thanks to all who ran!

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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www.voicemagazine.org

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

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