

THE VOICE

MAGAZINE

Vol 20 Iss 15 2012-04-20

Taking Out the Trash

Small is the new big

Needle Notes

Acupuncture

Free Books!

Open-source texts

Plus:

*In Conversation With
From Where I Sit
and much more!*



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

Broad Minds Think Small, Part II: Starting Fresh.....	3
In Conversation with . . . Paul Leighton, Part II	6
Health Matters: Acupuncture	8

Columns

From Where I Sit: Money Well Spent	10
Write Stuff: Open-Source Textbooks	11
Chronicles of Cruiscin Lan	12
The Mindful Bard: <i>Cave of Forgotten Dreams</i>	13
AUSU Update: April 2012	16

News and Events

Click of the Wrist.....	5
Did You Know?	9
We've Moved!	14
International News Desk	15

From Our Readers

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

***The Voice
Magazine***

www.voicemagazine.org

500 Energy Square
10109 – 106 ST NW
Edmonton AB
T5J 3L7

800.788.9041 ext. 2905

Email
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, and please
indicate if we may publish your letter.



BROAD MINDS THINK SMALL

Max Birkner

Part II: Starting Fresh

(Read Part I of the minimalist adventure [here](#).)

The night of the robbery was the first night of my life as a minimalist. The Wal-Mart was open 24 hours and we had nowhere else to go. Walking the aisles, feeling weightless, I realized the absurdity of all the needless things that people came to buy there every day. Plastic action figures and BPA-laden water bottles filled entire shelves. Hundreds of years from now I'd be dead, and the plastic bottles would still be sitting in a South American dump or floating in an ocean garbage patch.

How's that for perspective?

Maybe by this point I've almost gotten you convinced. You've looked around at things in your house. The dead potted plants, the old souvenirs, and a bunch of electronic gear you don't use anymore have been put out the door. You've gone through your closet and gotten rid of the clothing that you never wear. Books? Take them to a dealer. With a library card you can be as literate and unburdened as you want.

If you're a beginner and intimidated by the prospect of getting rid of stuff, take your time. The downscaling process can be daunting, so start small—you don't need to throw stuff away or sell everything of value just yet. If you have storage space, put away things that you don't use. Leave them out of sight for a month or two to see if you miss them. If you can make do with seven t-shirts, you won't need the dozen others that you put away. The same goes for shoes. And the same for kitchen gadgets. A good way to get priorities straight is to look around your home and decide what you would grab if the place were burning down. I would grab my journals and laptop.

Now the space around you looks bigger. The walls are brighter. You can see the carpet. While you were clearing the place up you realized how well this coincides with the season. It is spring cleaning time after all. Earth Day this weekend will have nothing on you. Since you're already on the path, get rid of the pizza boxes that have been sitting in the kitchen for a month, and all the other "just in case" containers. Cleaning up takes a lot less time once the extras are out of the picture.

This is beginning to feel good. You feel healthy, awake, and seem to have things under control. Now go over to your computer. Minimalism can go digital, too. If you're a writer like I am, you're bound to have early stage documents that just never made it further than your hard drive. Get rid of them. New ideas have room to grow when we rid ourselves of old ones.

"There are two ways to be rich: One is by acquiring much, and the other is by desiring little."

Jackie French Koller

Finally, go to your garage. Do you have a vehicle that requires too much maintenance for the amount of time you spend using it? How much money do you shell out on insurance every month, money that you could be using for a car sharing service? Because I live on the temperate West Coast, I've recently given

up my car for a motorcycle, which saves a lot of money on insurance, maintenance, and fuel. To top that off, the emissions output is significantly lower.

Overwhelmed? Take baby steps:

"The downscaling process can be daunting, so start small—you don't need to throw stuff away or sell everything of value just yet. If you have storage space, put away things that you don't use. Leave them out of sight for a month or two to see if you miss them."

By this point everything in your life is getting streamlined. You realize that you don't need as much room anymore, and that moving is simple when you only have a few possessions. What about economizing a bit by moving into a house with friends? Take a room each; the rent will become almost nominal, no matter where you live.

With all that money you just saved, you can now treat yourself. Can you think of anything you've always wanted to do but never got around to doing? Now is the time to go skydiving or wine tasting. You can easily afford it. And no, gathering experiences does not count as hoarding.

It is also time to use your money on some fine goods. Did I just say that? I sure did. While you can almost certainly make do with some of the good things you spared from your previously congested life, it may be a good time to look at some new, longer-lasting gear. We all need things, just not too many. You've saved money by paring down on cumbersome one-purpose items, so now is the time to get creative and do some research on high-quality footwear, clothing, and other multi-purpose pieces. In my place there are no blankets; I simply use my sleeping bag. It will come with me when I go, and it won't require a special comforter storage bag. Interestingly, there is an entire industry directed toward minimalists. It is up to you, though, to make sure you don't get caught up in the gear game again. Simply stick with what you need.

Minimalism is not just for the student. Once you get into it, there's a high chance that you'll see the benefits and begin to enjoy it. Keeping your stuff to a minimum means competing with yourself. It also means that you will begin to measure yourself, and what you deem to be satisfying, in a new way.

You will also find common ground with some interesting people. A Google search will bring up innovators from all over the world, people who know that small is the new big. Jay Shafer, who has been pushing the benefits of small houses since 1997, is just one example. He is an excellent model of someone who has built his life and career around going small. The bottom line is, living as a minimalist is possible and is being done.



The post-robbery part of our trip was like nothing I'd ever experienced. It was actually easier to travel with nothing. We arrived at my parents' place in Vancouver a week later on December 22. We had new thrift store jackets, but that was it. My back was light and empty. My brain was full.

CLICK OF THE WRIST

Recycle!

Recycling is easy—for the basics, like glass, paper, and aluminum. But what about items that are harder to classify (“weird” plastics, electronics, ink and toner cartridges, and more)? Click these links to learn how to recycle some of your other household junk.

Ink and Toner

While there are options for refilling your ink cartridges and some toner cartridges, there is an easy way to recycle these items, too: simply drop them off at any Staples Canada location. The office supply chain's Recycle for Education program channels the revenue from the recycled materials into local schools. It's a win-win for the earth's future!

Old Electronics

Relatively speaking, electronics have a pretty short lifespan. But they don't need to end up in the landfill—there are many organizations that will recycle your unwanted electronics for you. Recycle Your Electronics is an Ontario-based program that provides drop-off boxes in communities around the province. Live in a province outside Ontario? Check [here](#) or [here](#) for options near you.

Plastic Problem

Confused by the numbers on various types of plastics? This guide, from The Daily Green, classifies plastics and explains how recyclable they are and what they can be turned into.

Phones and Batteries

You're finally eligible for a new smart phone—but don't toss the old model in the trash. The Call2Recycle program facilitates the recycling of phones and rechargeable batteries. Check the site for a drop-off location in your community.



IN CONVERSATION WITH . . .

Wanda Waterman



Paul Leighton, Part II

Paul Leighton is a Diversity Fellow and a Technology Fellow in the Department of Sociology, Anthropology, and Criminology at the Eastern Michigan University. He has co-authored a number of important books on crime and violence, including Class, Race, Gender and Crime. He's often quoted by major media outlets in the United States and beyond. On March 12, as part of the Saul O Sidore Lectures Series at Plymouth State University, he spoke on the subject discussed

in his book The Rich Get Richer and the Poor Get Prison: Inequality, Corporate Power and Crime (co-authored with Jeffrey Reiman), arguing that the kind of extreme economic inequality that exists in the United States today increases the incidence and severity of crime at both ends of the class spectrum. Recently he took the time to discuss his research with Wanda Waterman.

(See Part I of this interview [here](#).)

And Now For Some Answers

"I think that the question of how power can be exerted from the lower reaches has never been more important. It will ultimately determine whether another world is indeed possible."

Frances Fox Piven

In your experience, does studying crime and violence in such depth pose the risk of creating psychological and emotional stress for those studying it?

It largely depends on how you study it. People who do statistical studies are largely shielded by the numbers from some of the human suffering represented by the data, and that can be a helpful approach at times. At the other extreme are people out in the field where the violence is happening or dealing with victims closely and experiencing secondary trauma from that.

For many people there is some perspective that comes from studying violence, and it can be immensely rewarding when or if your work helps someone. There are still rough spots—depression, cynicism, etc.—but some positives also. Take a look at some [pictures](#) drawn by survivors of the atomic bomb, and your crappy day doesn't seem as bad, even if you continue to be bothered by what you saw.

What kinds of practices might serve as antidotes to this kind of stress?

Being able to take a break from it when you need to. Having friends and family around to remind you it's not all evil and fucked up out there. Many organizations that deal with violence more directly for longer periods of time develop programs, formal or informal counselling, or mental health days, etc., to help people.

Is it possible that the large corporations holding most of the world's wealth now are simply too powerful to police?

The first edition of David Korton's book *When Corporations Rule the World* was 1995. In 2010, when you compare the revenue of corporations to the GDP (total of all goods and services sold), more than 30 of the top 100 economies are corporations. So, yes, they are too powerful to police and they increasingly can bully nations and regulatory agencies. I'm pessimistic about change occurring here. In the wake of the last financial crisis, we did not break up "too big to fail" financial institutions. It wasn't even a serious conversation.

What's the answer? How can we work together to reduce violence?

Let's start by recognizing that punishment has a limited place in preventing crime and violence. Budgets that spend more on prison than [on] higher education and community programs are indications of unsustainable and misguided policy. We need to get outside of the criminal justice system and embrace the priorities identified by Currie in an earlier question.

There are additional policies related to improving communities and implementing restorative justice practices. These regard crime not as a harm to the state, but to the community. It tries to heal rather than punish, hold the offender accountable, and really listen to the victim. We need to fund the Violence Against Women Act and get serious about acquaintance rape.

I fear a longer list has the tendency to overwhelm rather than help. I'd say that there are individual, community, and structural answers for each type of violence. No one has the obligation to fix it all. But this is an important area to understand, even if it is just so that our thoughts and comments do not lend support for bad policies.



HEALTH MATTERS

Katie D'Souza

**Acupuncture**

Acupuncture. It's becoming increasingly popular, but the visuals can seem confusing or even scary. How can long needles inserted into a patient be healing or helpful? What exactly is acupuncture, and can it really work on ailments like headaches, stress, or fertility?

What Is It?

Acupuncture is one of the world's oldest forms of medical treatment. Originating in the East, acupuncture involves the use of super-thin needles inserted into the body at either known acupuncture points (more on this later) or areas of muscle soreness. No drugs or even herbal remedies accompany the treatment; results come from just the needles themselves.

How Does It Work?

Both the East and the West each have a theory how acupuncture works. In Eastern thought, everything is comprised of two complementary yet opposing elements: yin and yang. When yin and yang are in balance in the body, there is no disharmony (disease). Additionally, all energy, or "qi" (pronounced "chee"), in the body flows along certain pathways, called meridians. If the qi is blocked, there is disharmony in that area, creating an imbalance in the body. The result is disease, whether something small like a headache or a more major ailment. By inserting acupuncture needles in specific acupuncture points (pressure points or areas where qi is at surface level), this blockage can be moved, meaning smoother flow of qi, increased harmony in the body, and resultant betterment of symptoms.

The Western theory of acupuncture is related to the nervous system. Under this school of thought, acupuncture needles stimulate points in the central nervous system, which in turn stimulate the release of hormones and neurotransmitters, chemical messengers that exert physiological influences on the body.

Whichever theory you prefer, the effects are the same: acupuncture results in increased blood flow to the area in question, meaning increased circulation, improved waste removal, and increased nutrient influx. This means better health overall in the target area (and the body as a whole). Additionally, the needling of certain acupuncture points, or sequences of points, can directly affect specific organs in the body.

Scared of Needles?

As I often tell my patients, not all needles are created equal. Acupuncture needles aren't like those scary big ones that are used in labs for blood draws. In fact, they're the opposite: acupuncture needles are extremely thin (the width of a human hair), usually painless, and are never used for blood draws.

What about China?

Lately, Chinese products have been under investigation due to chemical concerns in certain exported products. However, with acupuncture needles you should have nothing to worry about. Although the art and science of acupuncture originated in the East, needles are readily available from North American suppliers. As well, needles are pre-packaged and sterilized, and are never used twice.

Final Words

A few things to keep in mind: acupuncture, like most natural treatments, does take time to effect a cure or the betterment of symptoms. Although quick relief of sinus congestion and headaches are possible, the best results stem from a series of regular acupuncture sessions. This is particularly the case with a deeper or longer-term problem like fertility issues or chronic stress.

Additionally, when choosing practitioners make sure they are certified acupuncturists (usually L.Ac.) or naturopathic doctors, since the safety knowledge that comes with formal acupuncture training and licensing is imperative.

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.

DID YOU KNOW?

Google Art Project



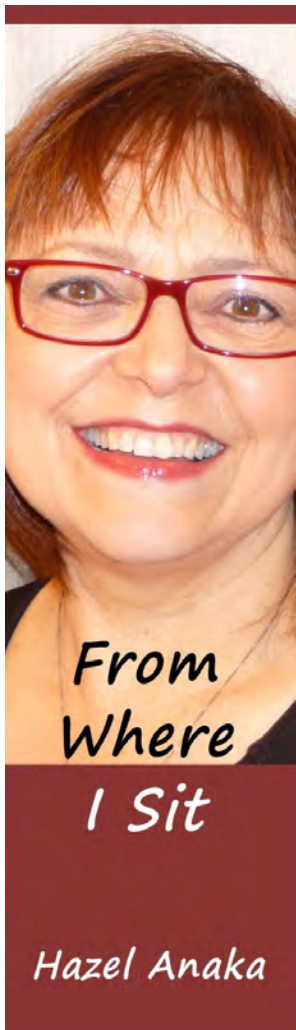
Searching for artistic inspiration—or the chance to relax while examining works of art? Whether you prefer the Louvre (Paris), the Museum of Modern Art (New York), or the Museum of Islamic Art (Qatar), there's a world of exploration available right at your fingertips with Google's new [Art Project](#).

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.”



Money Well Spent

What do designer coffees, magazines, bottled water, fast food, and cigarettes have in common? According to money experts, they are standing between you and future wealth. David Bach first coined the expression “latte factor” to identify those small, unconscious, often daily purchases many of us make. He contends that if we invested the money we would have blown on these incidentals, we could be rich. To do the math on your own vices, check out his [website](#) for the latte factor calculator.

I believe him. Really. For starters, he’s got way more money than I do. He’s an international speaker and the bestselling author of a gazillion books. It makes sense. You look at your numbers, I’ll look at mine. It’s a worthwhile reality check.

If you are worshipping daily at the Timmy’s/Starbucks shrine, if you buy magazines off the rack, if you can’t remember the last glass of tap water you’ve had, if the people at Mickey D’s greet you by name, and if you hover five metres from doorways puffing away, chances are you can make some adjustments. Your sacrifices may even benefit more than your bank account.

But as with most things in life, perhaps some perspective is in order. If you’ve got only one or two splurges, maybe it’s not the end of the world. Or maybe you can figure out ways to save on those things you can’t or won’t give up. Buying a case of water on sale has to be cheaper than buying water from a convenience store.

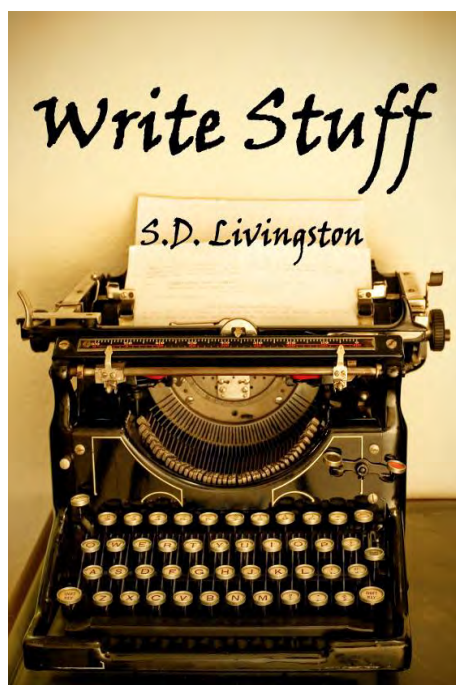
Using a coupon or buying the special at Arby’s or A&W will save some dough. If you smoke, that’s just bad—and you should run, not walk, to whatever is out there to help you quit.

A quick tally of my magazine subscriptions shows I’ve got nine different publications coming into my home each month. I’ve got to admit I’m surprised. That snuck up on me. If you’ve read the usual offers, you know I’m saving up to 70 per cent off the cover price And getting a free gift for replying today in the postage-paid envelope! Don’t laugh. I can wear my free watch from *Chatelaine* and not get a rash (and this after spending hundreds of dollars on Fossil and Roots watches over the years).

My point is this: I’m getting value from these magazines. Three home décor titles tickle my fancy and appeal to my design aesthetic. Three others are intended for the “mature” reader and have valuable health and money features. The final three are women’s magazines that keep me in the loop about fashion, homemaking, and lifestyle issues.

Best of all is my new rule. The only time I can read a magazine is when I’m walking on the treadmill. It makes the minutes spent exercising fly by. It ensures that I read rather than skim. It makes sure the mags get read in the first place. It feels like money well spent, from where I sit.

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



Open-Source Textbooks

Free textbooks! Can you imagine the excitement a sign like that would cause on campus? It might seem like the stuff of fiction, but free textbooks are the latest entry on the open-source landscape—and they’re set to give the traditional market a run for its money.

Much in the way the software market once operated, the traditional textbook ecosystem has always tended toward inertia. For instance, the only software names most people knew for decades were Microsoft and Apple. Similarly, once a textbook becomes an accepted standard, it “can be difficult to get professors to change the books they use.”

Those words come from Brent Gordon, editor-in-chief of McGraw-Hill’s business and economics group, in a [Poets and Quants interview](#). And Gordon ought to know: McGraw-Hill publishes the major

competitors to one of the most widely used textbooks around, *Financial Management: Theory & Practice* by Eugene Brigham. “In some cases,” Gordon notes, “professors used these books when they were students. They have a comfort level with them.”

But free, open-source textbooks are a whole new customizable model that could set that inertia spinning.

One of the oldest and largest open-source publishers is [Flat World Knowledge](#). They have an interesting video on their homepage, one that explains the many options students can choose from: MP3 audiobooks, online quizzes, and flashcards, for example.

Other open-text supporters include The California Open Source Textbook Project ([COSTP](#)) which started in 2001 as a collaborative public–private effort to “address the high cost, content range, and consistent shortages of K-12 textbooks in California.” And then there’s [OpenStax College](#), a site that offers “peer-reviewed texts written by professional content developers.”

[Connexions](#) takes things one step further, allowing teachers, students, and authors to use “educational material made of small knowledge chunks called modules” to create customized books, reports, and even entire courses.

All that sounds great, but what about quality? Textbooks need to conform to a certain standard of excellence. They need to be reliable and accurate. For many courses, the textbooks used need to be peer-reviewed. And let’s face it, all of that takes money. A lot of money, even before you start figuring in costs like graphics and permissions and professional design.

If textbooks are free, shouldn’t we worry about the adage that you get what you pay for?

Yes—and the major open-source publishers seem to take that expectation seriously. OpenStax, for instance, has support from several philanthropic organizations, including the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, the Twenty Million Minds Foundation, and Rice University (OpenStax was launched as a joint project between Rice University and Connexions.)

OpenStax textbooks are “developed and peer-reviewed by educators.” Flat World Knowledge uses a peer-review process as well, and its founders spent decades working for some of the largest textbook publishers in the business, including Pearson Education.

Will public schools and universities suddenly jump on the open-source wagon, tossing long-established texts out the window? Of course not, and we shouldn’t encourage them to do so without taking a good, long look at the options. But with the dazzling speed that open-source enthusiasts brought exciting changes to computers, your \$500 chemistry text could be the Commodore 64 of tomorrow.

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!).

CHRONICLES OF CRUISCIN LAN

Wanda Waterman



THE MINDFUL BARD

Wanda Waterman



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

Film: *Cave of Forgotten Dreams* (IFC Films 2011)

Director: Werner Herzog

Genre: Documentary

The Chauvet-Pont-d'Arc Cave Drawings: A Faithful Originality

Once upon a time, before the dawn of history, somebody drew animal pictures on the walls of a cave in what is now France. The drawings exhibited insight, skill, and a well-developed aesthetic. There was evidence of techniques that had created a three-dimensional quality, something largely missing from European art until the Renaissance.

The drawings all bear the mark of a master and display a commonality of style. It's easy to analyze this body of work as if it came from one person, but in fact the drawings were made by different people, artists who might have lived as many as four thousand years apart.

The Chauvet-Pont-d'Arc Cave quickly became a household name after ancient drawings were discovered there in 1994. The significance of this find is phenomenal, in a particular way for poets, painters, and mystics.

Since its discovery in modern times the cave has attracted hordes of tourists. Their breath on the walls of the cave has created mould, so the French government has had to restrict access to certain areas in order to protect and preserve the drawings.

Apparently the urge to protect the past is prehistoric as well; there's evidence that after these drawings were made, the people in the area respected them and took pains to protect them, even touching them up from time to time and adding new drawings with the same theme and in the same style.

This preservation is vital for reasons not always evident, reasons having to do with our connection to these ancestors and the debt we owe them as well as for what they still have to teach us. Not doing so will not bode well for us, and not because of some superstitious curse.

These "curses"—usually involving a grave dweller who will come to life to exact vengeance for the violation of his resting place—contain a bit of allegorical truth, representing if you will the emotional, spiritual, and psychological repercussions of dismissing the past.

"These 'curses' . . . contain a bit of allegorical truth, representing if you will the emotional, spiritual, and psychological repercussions of dismissing the past."

We don't have a lot of rational support for our prejudice against the ancient mind, even though a quick examination will reveal that our only advantage over them is that we have had the time to build better tools. It's quite possible that if we could resurrect one of our Paleolithic ancestors and bring her up to speed, she could outperform us on a number of intellectual tasks, including artistic creation.

The remarkable thing about this art is its use of that stream of collective inspiration that Jung talks about, that unconscious resource that only geniuses can tap into. This wellspring of creative inspiration compelled these cave people to create art in the same style, yet always with the same spontaneous charm, ease, and creativity. Yes, Bob the lion slayer may have been adding embellishments and new animals to the work of Bess the berry picker who lived five centuries before him, but his additions were original and authentic and delightful even as they paid homage to the previous work and echoed its style.

Cave of Forgotten Dreams is masterfully crafted and visually splendid. It's also thoughtful enough to spark endless discussions and ruminations on human nature and artistic endeavour.

Cave of Forgotten Dreams fulfills seven of the Mindful Bard's criteria for films well worth seeing: 1) it is authentic, original, and delightful; 2) it poses and admirably responds to questions that have a direct bearing on my view of existence; 3) it stimulates my mind; 4) it provides respite from a sick and cruel world, a respite enabling me to renew myself for a return to mindful artistic endeavour; 5) it inspires an awareness of the sanctity of creation; 6) it makes me want to be a better artist; and 7) it makes me appreciate that life is a complex and rare phenomenon, making living a unique opportunity.

"Man is a creature who walks in two worlds and traces upon the walls of his cave the wonders and the nightmare experiences of his spiritual pilgrimage."

Morris West

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.

WE'VE MOVED!

The Voice Magazine has settled into its new location in Edmonton. While our email and website remain the same, you can direct all written correspondence to our new address:

The Voice Magazine

500 Energy Square

10109 – 106 ST NW

Edmonton AB T5J 3L7

INTERNATIONAL NEWS DESK



At Home: Bear in There

“There’s a polar bear in our Fridigdaire,” goes the Shel Silverstein poem. For one Newfoundland family, that became a little too close to reality when a polar bear broke into their home in the middle of the night.

As *The Globe and Mail* [reports](#), homeowner Louis Reardon “got the shock of his life early Thursday when . . . a large male bear broke into [his] home” near St. Anthony, NL.

Just after 4 am, a bear broke through the door and surprised Reardon’s 29-year-old son, who had “heard a ruckus and flicked on the light to discover the animal.”

Reardon grabbed his shotgun and fired to frighten the bear, not wanting “to risk wounding it and have it come back furious at him.” “A polar bear doesn’t usually back down,” Reardon told reporters, adding that “You don’t take chances on stuff like that.”

Before breaking into Reardon’s home, the bear had “[beaten] in doors and [broken] windows at three other homes” as well as killed farm animals.

Local RCMP found and shot the bear before he could do further damage.

Around the World: Auroras Away

The skies look different from the surface of other worlds. But that’s not limited to gazing at the universe beyond. On Uranus the view really does look different than on our planet—thanks to the unusual auroras that form there.

As the CBC [reports](#), scientists have recently observed “[strange] auroras that are very different from Earth’s northern lights.”

While auroras on earth “usually take the form of green, red and purplish curtains of light in the night sky” and “can dance and ripple for hours,” the auroras on Uranus were short-lived and appeared during the day (on the side of the planet closest to the sun).

Scientists believe that the odd phenomenon is a result of Uranus’s magnetic field. While the “Earth’s magnetic and geographic poles . . . are near each other, Uranus’s magnetic poles are offset from its geographic poles — by 60 degrees.”

One of the researchers told reporters that Uranus’s “configuration is unique in the solar system.”

AUSU UPDATE: APRIL 2012



AU Students urge candidates to improve university funding

AU students are concerned about the financial health of Athabasca University and the effect of recent news stories on the reputation of the AUSU membership.

A recent CBC report notes that in recent years the university has made a series of reserve draws to cover budget shortfalls, draining the once \$30-million reserve fund.

Tuition and fees at AU, meanwhile, continue to increase despite the concerns of AUSU that education is becoming increasingly unaffordable in Alberta.

“I’m very concerned about AU’s financial situation,” says AUSU President Bethany Tynes. “AU is increasing student fees, observing hiring freezes, denying sabbaticals, delaying projects, and downsizing their offices due to a lack of available funds. We don’t want to see the quality of our education diminish.”

“At the same time,” Tynes continues, “I am confused by AU Board Chair Barry Walker’s comment to the CBC that AU is ‘in a very sound financial position,’ as the concerns we’ve noted do not support the notion that we’re financially sound.”

Chronic underfunding of public post-secondary education is a factor in AU’s financial stress. AU students have lobbied Alberta in recent years to address the shortfall; our members call on the candidates in Alberta’s provincial election to make post-secondary funding a priority in their platforms and to ensure that all Alberta universities are funded equally and sufficiently. Public post-secondary institutions need a reliable, predictable funding model that provides sufficient base operating funds to support a world-class education.

Athabasca University Students' Union is the largest students' union in Alberta, representing nearly 40,000 undergraduates annually.

Media Contact:

Tamra Ross, Executive Director, AUSU

1-800-788-9041 extension 2905

executivedirector@ausu.org

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 for more information.

THE VOICE

500 Energy Square - 10109 – 106 St NW - Edmonton AB - T5J 3L7
- 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

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

Contact *The Voice* at voice@voicemagazine.org.

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