

THE VOICE

MAGAZINE

Vol 20 Iss 16 2012-04-27

Doctor, Doctor

Know before you go

Copy Wrong

Access Copyright

Do the Wave

Train lesson

*Plus:
From Where I Sit
Write Stuff
and much more!*



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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.



EDITORIAL

Christina M. Frey



Guy on the Train

On a recent trip we let the train zip us around downtown, and spent our time people watching instead of fighting traffic. The passengers on board ran the gamut: lawyers and nurses and office workers returning home at the end of the day. Students heading out for some fun. Couples going wherever couples go on a Monday night. Tourists like us.

And then there was that guy.

I think he was a stand-up comedian of some sort. At least, that's the impression he gave as he chattily proclaimed his curriculum vitae to the other passengers. He was friendly and conversational enough. But he gave the distinct impression of *weird*.

We reached our stop and left him behind without a further thought. But then I began to wonder: was it the guy himself? Or is approaching and chatting with strangers so unusual that it made us raise our eyebrows? After all, the secret train code requires us to mind our own business, faces glued to screens, earplugs crammed into ears. We're somehow supposed to travel alone in the crowd.

Kind of like we travel through life . . . lonesome voyagers in a sea of humanity.

Why is that? Why does public friendliness seem so foreign as to strike us as weird, even suspect?

I'm not convinced it's the fault of technology. True, all the screens and earphones help ensure we remain isolated. But maybe we're the ones to blame, not the phones and iPods.

We get a dose of fear from the daily news. Yet we're equally aware that millions of people volunteer, care for their families, and play the Good Samaritan and save strangers' lives. So I don't know that public isolation happens out of fear, though maybe fear plays a part.

Fear can happen on a deeper level, involving more than just worry over bodily harm. Perhaps we avoid interaction because we fear commitment. Interacting or getting involved on any level requires a connection. To engage in conversation is to give a little of ourselves, even if just for a moment, even if it's on an inconsequential matter. In this use-and-toss world, we don't know how to commit anymore, so we avoid it completely.

But it doesn't make us happy.

I don't know that a smile and hello will solve all our problems. But it might be a start. After all, if society can start breaking ground and committing to just one friendly word to a stranger, deeper connections may follow. Then, as we stop fearing human interaction and start embracing it, we may find a new appreciation of the wonders of our fellow travellers on the journey of life.

A GOOD OL' BOY

Greg Ryan



Ten years ago I was sitting on the patio of the Bay Street Bistro, having a celebratory lunch with my two daughters. We were marking the completion of another school year.

Our lives were about to change.

A young woman, her arms embracing a worn cardboard box, stops on the sidewalk and signals to us by waving her hand at my girls. The woman tips the box forward to display its contents. Inside are four balls of mewling fur.

"Ten dollars," she says. "They're orphans."

Before I can say no, the girls bolt from the table. An emaciated creature is held up for my inspection, followed by a chorus of "Please, please, pleeease!" I acquiesce easily. I hand over a \$10 bill to this strange salesperson and tuck our new acquisition inside my jacket's voluminous inside pocket.

My wife meets her tribe at the front door, where the kitten is placed into her hands for examination. She then draws me aside and with tight-lipped skepticism says, "That poor creature won't make it through the night."

The next morning I find my spouse at the kitchen table. She's feeding the kitten warm milk through an eye dropper—a vigil she'd maintained for eight hours. With a smile she informs me that with a little loving care, the tabby will be fine.

The children soon hurry downstairs and a conference is convened; our newest family member needs a name. My oldest child has just read this passage from *A Clockwork Orange*: "Come and get one in the yarbles, if you have any yarbles, you eunuch thou!" But while Yarbles is a humorous and creative proposal, it doesn't seem appropriate for a defenceless creature not yet neutered. Mother recommends Bubba, and when she speaks the kitten utters a tremulous *meow*.

Bubba spends the first day exploring his new territory, moving around on wobbly legs. As his strength increases, he roams further afield. Our house is reached by entering a long, narrow street that ends in a bubble-shaped court. The children had christened the street King's Court, naming it for the oldest and first resident to welcome the family. The houses that circle King's Court back onto cultivated parkland, an ideal location for children and pets.

By the time Bubba is a year old he has claimed territorial dominion over King's Court. His light green eyes track the neighbours' comings and goings. He's an aggressive defender against nonhuman intruders, and his scarred, torn ears are a testimony to his vigilant attentiveness. Bubba has too much pride to back away from trespassers. He challenges his opponents head on and refuses to turn and run when outmatched. Bubba takes several trips to the veterinary office every year to receive stitches and antibiotics. On one

memorable occasion I have to separate him from an altercation with a raccoon. Even I am apprehensive about getting too close—a raccoon is a fierce foe and I know better than to mess with one that's in fight mode. I solve my dilemma by spraying both combatants with hose water. Better a wet cat than a dead one.

Last year, Bubba disappeared. I visited the animal shelter every evening and wandered the streets, calling his name. A week passed and I had reconciled myself to the fact that Bubba wouldn't be returning, and worse, that I would never know why. Admittedly, I was heartbroken. Then, waking up on Saturday morning, I found Bubba sprawled across my legs. My spouse had heard him calling at the patio door during the night and let him in. Under normal conditions, he's barred from the bedroom. I suspect my wife's generous act was as much for my benefit as for Bubba's.

I work from my home performing freelance tasks for various local businesses. A large mahogany desk sits in front of a ground floor bay window with a wide sill that provides Bubba with a sentinel's outpost from which to view his Court. While I'm occupied at my desk, he spends the time observing his protectorate, preening his fur, or dreaming. I know he dreams, because his tail tip twitches, his ears jerk back and forth, and low growls rumble in his throat. Perhaps he's reliving the standoff with the raccoon. When he wants a diversion, tracking the cursor on my computer monitor becomes an interesting pastime.

I welcome Bubba's companionship, and he demands mine. He will push his way into the bedroom when I sleep late, hopping onto the bed and gives me a head butt. It's like he's trying to say, "I know it's Sunday and you can remain beneath the covers if you want, but breakfast was due an hour ago."

Or when I'm in the office and my focus is elsewhere, he nips my ankle to get attention. However, I am accustomed to his belligerence and don't take his painful reminders personally.

My friend the cat is beginning to exhibit signs that he's aging. His left hip is stiff and some days he needs help climbing the stairs. He's content to remain indoors now, and shuns all but the mildest days. I note a new element of caution in his approach to King's Court invaders. He's taken to treating them with disdain, but occasionally his old nature exerts itself and a trip to the veterinary clinic is the result. The vet assures me that Bubba's general health is good despite the rheumatic hip. He may be slower than he was a year ago, but the heart of a lion still beats in his chest.

As I write these words, Bubba is curled up on the window sill. His purr fills the office as he indulges in an afternoon nap.

Bubba cost me ten dollars ten years ago. Today, I wouldn't trade him for all the gold in the world.



STUDY SPACE

Tamra Ross



Copy Wrong, Part I

Copyright and students: the conversation usually revolves around concerns of plagiarism. But there is much, much more at stake.

For example, are you aware of how copyright fees affect your learning materials? One common misperception is that electronic materials can be easily distributed for free because they are easy to reproduce. However, students

may not realize that schools still must pay publishers a rate for every copy that is sent to students—or that agencies like Access Copyright are seeking fees even for linking to free web-based materials.

Surprised? You're not alone. Few students are aware of Access Copyright or how the organization affects the cost and availability of learning materials. But the battle rages on between universities, faculty, and journalists, and the copyright collective at the center of it all: Access Copyright.

Access Copyright is the familiar name of the Canadian Copyright Licensing Agency. According to their website, the group “provides innovative copyright licensing solutions to governments, businesses, educators and other organizations for legal, worry free access to copyright protected content while making sure that the creators and publishers are paid for the secondary uses of their works.” A lofty and honourable goal, to be sure, but the description really doesn't explain the scope of the organization or the controversy surrounding its recent decisions. Rather than merely being a “service provider for educators, businesses, school, government, and other users of copyright protected works,” the group has considerable leverage to enforce its rulings.

This became evident in September 2011. At that time, Access Copyright increased fees for universities providing copyrighted material, and introduced a new tariff that requires universities to pay up any time they so much as email a link to copyrighted material. The fee applies even if the email contains no portion of the copyright-protected material. While universities at first supported such fees as part of an ethical approach to ensuring that authors are fairly compensated for their work, increasingly schools are opting out of Access Copyright's services. According to many universities, fees are unreasonable and reporting requirements have become unmanageable; worse, many schools fear that they soon may be unable to provide students with sufficient access to quality materials without substantial increases to already high tuition fees.

The fee increases are, in fact, staggering: for example, in 2010 the University of Calgary paid \$27,500 in fees, and in 2011 Access Copyright requested a tariff of \$45 per student (totalling \$1.2 million).

Not surprisingly, the University of Calgary and other schools balked, and many are choosing to end their agreements with the organization. However, it's not that simple. By ending its deal with Access Copyright, a university must then manage copyright and materials licensing on its own, and the result for students is a decrease in bound course packs, and more links to materials online.

AU is no exception: in September 2011, AU President Frits Pannekoek announced that the university would join "more than 35 other universities in Canada in electing to opt out of using Access Copyright for permissions related to the use of third party materials in courses." Like U of C, AU has begun to manage its own copyrights and permissions to use materials for reading files and other course resources. AU has continued to monitor the situation and has been particularly vocal on the issue.

Access Copyright affects you directly than you may think:

"[Many] schools fear that they soon may be unable to provide students with sufficient access to quality materials without substantial increases to already high tuition fees."

Yet the battle is far from over, particularly as some universities, like the University of Western Ontario and the University of Toronto, are supportive of the agency. This has created concern that Access Copyright has already successfully planted the thin edge of the wedge toward unprecedented control over who can access materials necessary for education. This in particular in the light of the new Access Copyright decision which seeks to charge universities for forwarding links to material, even if there is no portion of the copyright-protected material included in the email.

Yet another rift that will likely affect students' access to materials is the one brewing between the AUCC (which represents the presidents of Canadian universities) and CAUT, which represents university faculty. When university faculty and administration are at odds, students sit in an uncomfortable middle ground—AU students watching the news lately likely already have such concerns—so this is another battle to be watched closely.

As of February of this year, CAUT has drawn the battle lines. A campaign notice on the CAUT website summarizes and strongly criticizes a recent agreement between Access Copyright and AUCC, and hopes to rally universities to resist entering into an agreement which "harms the interests of academic staff and students, fails to reflect current law and undermines efforts to create better ways of accessing, using and sharing educational and research material."

Next week we will take a closer look at that agreement and discuss why CAUT feels it disadvantages students as well as what students can do to ensure that they continue to have access to the widest possible range of quality learning materials.

SOUND OFF!

How do you feel about Access Copyright and how it affects you as a student? Let us know, and we may publish your letter next week!

HEALTH MATTERS

Katie D'Souza



Naturally Qualified

As interest in alternative health grows, natural health practitioners seem to be springing up everywhere. But how credible is your natural health provider? Has she attended and passed an accredited course at a reputable school and been licensed for practice by a third-party licensing body (to whom she is still accountable)? Or does he claim to practice safe natural medicine, with only a weekend course behind his name?

In many parts of Canada and the US there is little or no regulation of natural health practitioners. This means that there are no training requirements, so misrepresentation is easy: natural health care practitioners can label themselves as such, despite their inadequate practical training, lack of knowledge, and often dangerous medical practices. Practitioners can easily claim skills they don't possess, advertising themselves using the same descriptive name as qualified practitioners ("massage therapist," for instance).

Before placing yourself under the care of natural health practitioners, it is imperative to check out their qualifications and education first. Don't be satisfied with a claim ("I'm an acupuncturist"); find out where they received their education (was it the Canadian College of Naturopathic Medicine or a correspondence natural health course?), what initials they have behind their name (and whether these actually exist as part of a body of practitioners), and whether they've passed their licensing exams.

Why Bother?

But why the fuss? Since natural health practitioners practice "natural" medicine, it must be safe, right? Not necessarily.

There are two main reasons for checking your practitioner's qualifications. First is safety; a practitioner who's passed licensing exams has been tested extensively around safety issues. A naturopathic doctor, for instance, has been tested for knowledge of contraindications between botanical supplements and pharmaceutical medications. A properly trained acupuncturist knows what angle to insert acupuncture needles to avoid piercing organs or major blood vessels. Safety is key in medical practice, regardless of whether the treatment is "natural," and improper instruction can be devastating to the patient. I recall the story of a friend who had visited a shiatsu therapist for stress relief; she hadn't checked to ensure his proper training and licensing, and as a result sustained a serious brain stem injury when the practitioner attempted heavy pressure on the back of her neck as part of his therapy.

The second reason to check your practitioner's qualifications is to assess her skills and training. You want the best health care available, so your provider should be able to work with you on all aspects of your care. Better training and experience can lead to better results. You want someone trustworthy and reliable, someone of whom you can ask questions and who will give you knowledgeable answers.

What Do I Look For?

There should be several must-have items on your checklist. First, check the “letters” after the practitioner’s name. Is your naturopath a “naturopath” or a “naturopathic doctor”? The letters “N.D” after the name should distinguish the real from the fake. In some provinces of Canada (Ontario, for instance) and much of the US, anyone can call herself a “naturopath” (with no distinction between those who’ve had a six-month correspondence course with no clinical experience and those who have taken a four-year postgraduate program with 12 months of clinical rotation). Find out what the licensing requirements are in your province or state, and go from there.

Is your massage therapist a Registered Massage Therapist (R.M.T), or does he just call himself a “massage therapist”? The R.M.T. initials mean that the practitioner has not only passed a comprehensive program at a reputable school with clinical experience, but has also passed licensing exams.

*“Safety is key in medical practice, regardless of whether the treatment is ‘natural,’ and improper instruction can be devastating to the patient.”
Ensure that your natural health care practitioner is qualified!*

What about your acupuncturist? The initials D.Ac. Or L.Ac. after the name indicate an acupuncturist is licensed to practice in your province or state. You can determine licensing status either through a direct inquiry or through a visit to the practitioner’s office to ensure that the certificate from the licensing body is not only displayed on the wall but also up to date (with registration stickers for the current year, or some other significance indicating current licensure).

Checking qualifications can seem unnecessary, but without consistent regulation of natural health practitioners it’s easy for unqualified practitioners to pass themselves off as thoroughly trained. Your health is important enough that it’s worth the hassle to ensure the best possible care.

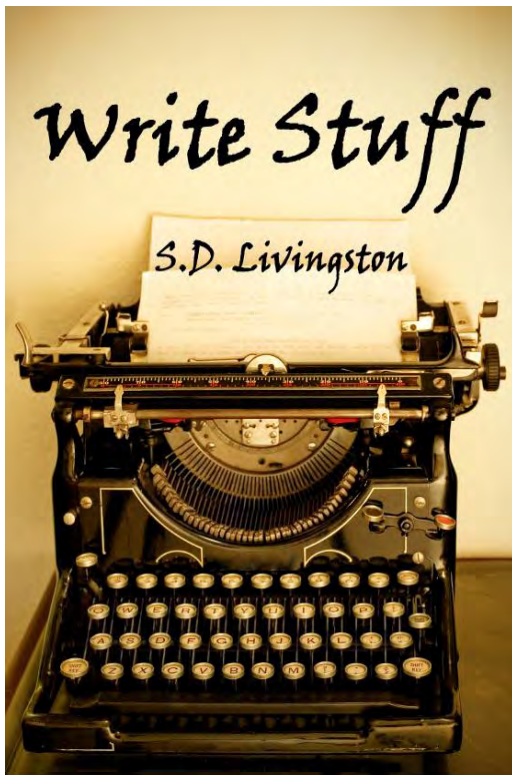
Katie D’Souza is an AU graduate and a licensed naturopathic doctor. She currently practices in Ontario.

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.

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Glistening Prose

This article originally appeared in volume 1939 of *The Voice* (October 14, 2011).

LOL. ROFL. YMMV. If these initialisms have you scurrying for the comfort of your Strunk and White, you're not alone. It's popular these days to bemoan the falling standards of written language. Literacy, punctuation, and grammar have slipped into the morass of text speak and misspelled blogs. Or have they? When it comes to the written word, holding onto the good old days is a losing battle—and one that shouldn't even be fought.

Language is a constantly evolving thing, with new words being coined all the time. In the 14th century it was words like *glisten*, in use well before Shakespeare penned "All that glisters is not gold" in *The Merchant of Venice*. The modern version of the word retains its original meaning, but should we really protest when jewellery ads promise that their diamonds will *glitter*?

If that's the case, then we ought to give students a failing grade for writing *island* instead of *eyland*—the original spelling, as this fascinating *Sunday Times* [article](#) points out.

Make no mistake, spelling matters. But only for the larger matter of consistency. The main goal of writing is to make ourselves understood, whether we're trying to entertain someone or write a manual on how to fly a plane. Consistency enhances that understanding, and we'd be lost without it. After all, if I randomly labelled the control panel *altitude*, *altitewd*, and *alt2d*, how the heck would you know whether you were about to crash into a mountain? Likewise, if everyone knows that YMMV is a fast, easy way of saying your results might vary from mine, then what's the problem with using it?

Perhaps it's not the change itself we're worried about, but the dizzying pace of it. For the English language, though, that's nothing new. A special [report](#) from the National Science Foundation notes that "while Japanese has changed relatively little over 1,000 years, English evolved rapidly in just a few centuries."

We've borrowed words from Latin, Norse, French, and more, and altered them to suit our needs. And if YMMV seems foreign to you, just imagine how poor Chaucer would feel if he spotted the word *sweet* on a Hallmark card, when his classic works had forever enshrined it as *soote* (or so he may have thought).

Should we rely on the experts, then? Pull out our Strunkenwhite, as it's affectionately known, and point indignantly to the rules? No, because the "rules" are only based on accepted usage—and what's considered acceptable depends on the way people use language at different periods in time.

Never end a sentence with a preposition? Maybe not if you're writing in Latin, but it's fine in English. Never split infinitives? That one's been debunked too. Even the illustrious team of Strunk and White have fallen in esteem these days. For writers that rail against the use of passive construction, they use it in the very sentence that advises against it (as the Language Log illustrates).

And one half of that team, E.B. White, is guilty of a 21 per cent passive construction rate in his introduction to *Letters of E.B. White*. By comparison, studies of contemporary journals found that the highest rate of passive construction use was 13 per cent.

Perhaps the last word should go to the *Chicago Manual of Style*, in October 2011's online Q & A. When a reader asks about singular vs. plural subjects, the *Chicago* editors end their reply with this winner: "We prefer that you make up whatever rule you like. We are going to take an aspirin and lie down."

Editors and writers everywhere are surely thinking, "LOL."

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!).

"When it comes to the written word, holding onto the good old days is a losing battle—and one that shouldn't even be fought."

DID YOU KNOW?

Khan Academy

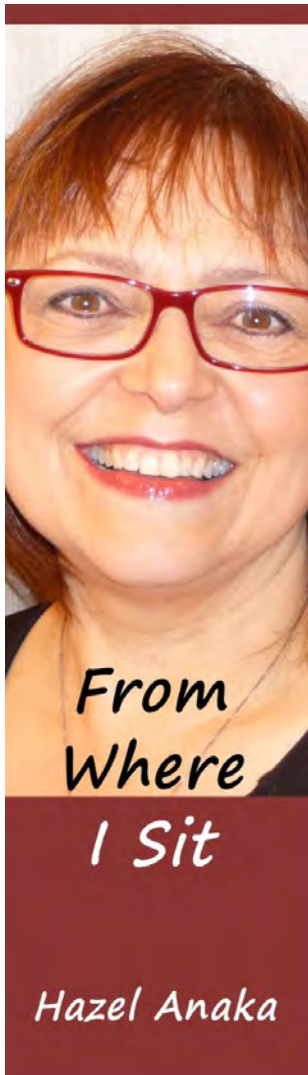


Searching for artistic inspiration—or the chance to relax while examining works of art? Need a brush-up in your math skills before heading back to university after a long break? Want some extra tutoring in basic finance or accounting to help cope with the demands of your new job? Lost in your university calculus course? Confused about copyright legislation and SOPA/PIPA?

Check out [Khan Academy](#), a free web resource that's becoming increasingly popular. Khan Academy has the "goal of changing education for the better by providing a free world-class education to anyone anywhere."

Its educational videos and "interactive challenges . . . and assessments" are freely available online and cover everything from addition to calculus to organic chemistry to test prep. Videos range from general to in-depth, and in addition to more typical academic subjects like math, science, and history, they include current topics like how bailouts work, extensive SAT and GMAT prep materials, and even brain teasers.

Although much of the recent media buzz has focussed on Khan Academy's K-12 resources, it offers a wealth of material for students of all ages and learning levels, including university studies.



We Decide

As I write this, we in Alberta are on the eve of a provincial election. For the second time in my memory we are on the cusp of real change. The last time this happened, Peter Lougheed's upstart Conservatives took Alberta by storm.

Over 40 years ago.

Since then the Conservatives have governed, and voting seemed a waste of a ballot. Oh, I always voted, but the result always seemed a foregone conclusion. And it was.

This time, sweeping change is guaranteed. No one, including observers and pundits, can call it. The Wildrose party, once predicted to get a majority and overthrow Alison Redford's party, has shot itself in the foot. A couple of candidates spouted bigoted, homophobic garbage. Rather than swiftly and decisively dealing with the issue Danielle Smith has defended their right to hold and express those beliefs, no matter how repugnant or regressive they may be. Additionally, Smith is unsure about climate change. As the world's third-largest producer of oil, that has implications for Alberta.

The juggernaut stalled as voters got a sense of where the Wildrose stood on the issues and how the province would change under an inexperienced and untested leader and candidates. It reminds me of the federal NDPs sweeping Quebec.

Now there is talk of a minority government, floor crossers, alliances, strategic voting, and the elimination of the official opposition. It makes for exciting times.

The Tories have grown smug and arrogant and need a lesson in humility. But as the four-week campaign progressed, some people got cold feet. They talked about the devil you know versus the one you don't.

This is all good, and healthy for democracy. We need to think and talk about what our vote means. The privacy of the polling booth offers us a huge gift. We each get to decide whether we want to support the person or the party. Do we vote *for* someone and something or *against* someone or something else? We need to show up to claim the right to decide.

I'll be on the front lines working as a Deputy Returning Officer at one of the polls in our area. The training we received and the accompanying guidebook reminded us of the privilege of voting. A lot of people, including me, will work very hard to run a good election. Protecting privacy, helping those who may need help, and doing our jobs to the best of our ability should ensure things go without a hitch.

It will be a long, hard day. I'll do my best as quickly as I can, because I really want to get home and watch the television coverage. This is reality TV at its finest. The outcome will matter perhaps for years to come. Our reputation on the world stage is at stake. For better or worse, we decide, from where I sit.

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

INTERNATIONAL NEWS DESK



At Home: Helping Your Neighbour

Among all the bad news out there, here's one gem that surfaced last week: Canadians care about one another. At least that's what a recent report seems to indicate.

As *The Toronto Star* reports, "47 per cent of Canadians over the age of 15" volunteered in 2010.

The numbers, provided by Statistics Canada in time for National Volunteer Week (April 15-22), showed that the more than 13 million Canadian volunteers "devoted almost 2.1 billion hours of their time," the "equivalent of almost 1.1 million full-time jobs."

Some volunteers showed particular dedication; just ten per cent were responsible for 53 per cent of the hours given. According to Statistics Canada, these amazing people "dedicated a minimum of 390 hours to their volunteer work over the course of a year, or the equivalent of almost 10 weeks in a full-time job." Another 15 per cent donated the equivalent of "between four and almost 10 full-time weeks of unpaid work."

The volunteering spirit was recognized by Prime Minister Stephen Harper in an official statement that compared volunteers to the "lifeblood of charitable organizations."

Even the smallest contribution of time or effort can make a huge difference in the lives of others.

Around the World: Rebound

If you let something go it will come back to you, the old saying goes. But what about when it's taken from you unwillingly? Stranger things may have happened, but it's hard to beat the story of a ball that was swept away by the 2011 tsunami in Japan.

As *The Toronto Star* reports, a Japanese teen's soccer ball is his one personal possession that survived when his house was washed out to sea.

The ball, which bears its owners name and had been a gift from his classmates, was recently discovered by a beachcomber in Alaska. It was half-buried in sand on an Alaskan island about "110 kilometres south of the . . . mainland."

The ball's owner is "surprised and thankful," telling reporters, "I've lost everything in the tsunami. So I'm delighted."

It is "one of the first pieces of debris from last year's tsunami to wash up on the other side of the Pacific."

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.

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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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