

THE VOICE

MAGAZINE

Vol 20 Iss 28 2012-07-20

Emergency Exit

Quit to win

Escape Artist

Film meets reality

Judge a Book

Modern Romeos

Plus:

Gregor's Bed

From Where I Sit

and much more!



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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

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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



Quit to Win

This article is adapted from one originally published August 5, 2011, in issue 1929.

“Winners never quit, and quitters never win,” the motivational poster says, and the sentiment is echoed in many aspects of life. Rarely is there a hero who pauses, changes course, and then restarts a quest in a different direction—and succeeds. In film and fiction alike, we’re presented with protagonists who keep their eyes focused on the end goal ahead, pursuing it regardless of personal consequences.

Look around, and you’ll notice that popular corporate culture is filled with phrases suggesting that stick-to-it-ness is the keystone of success. And do a Google search for “quotes on quitting,” and you’ll find advice from thousands of success stories whose motivational offerings make a fool of anyone who’d consider changing course.

That’s a shame. Because while it’s true that staying on target and mindfully pursuing goals is admirable and important, it’s far from being the only characteristic necessary for success. Equally crucial is the ability to not merely pursue a goal for the sake of pursuing, but to know when it’s time to switch to a new tack.

Constantly giving up whenever things get rough isn’t going to get us far. But knowing when it’s time to stop and readjust, pause and change our direction, or shift our focus can be vital not just to success but to sanity.

There’s no shame in recognizing that it’s time for a change; in fact, it’s extremely important to stop a non-productive course of action if we realize our goals have shifted or that we made a mistake in the first place. We need to develop the ability to say no, to decide that this isn’t working out for us, that we need to move in a different direction.

We know about thinking through decisions, about making lists of stay/go pros and cons. But even more importantly, when we’re changing course, it’s vital to ensure we’re running *toward* something rather than running away.

This ensures that we’re not merely shrinking from the low point that’s inevitable in every journey. It also forces us to make value judgments. Why do we want to take a new direction? Are we merely discouraged, or do we truly feel that this route will better fulfil us personally, professionally, or spiritually?

Having a goal to run toward also gives us a boost of self-esteem. How many goals and dreams are ignored out of existence due to the fear that a new start means an old failure? Setting out with a clear plan in mind means we can step away with confidence, looking ahead rather than at what we’re leaving behind.

And it’s that confidence, that spring in our step, that plants us firmly on our new path to success.

IN CONVERSATION WITH . . .

Wanda Waterman



Toby Beard, Part I

The Creative Value of Twisted Emotional States

"Nobody's eyes should have seen what your eyes have seen,

Should have felt all the pain and all of the sadness from all of those years.

But now I'm on the outside, now I'm looking in,

Not able to touch you, not able to hold you—I'm helpless back here."

Toby Beard, from "Stay"

Toby Beard is a singer-songwriter from Perth, Australia. Loved by audiences for her rich, husky voice, her infectious smile, and her heartfelt, frank lyrics, she's performed at major festivals all over the world. She recently recorded her fifth album, Coming Home. Currently on her 11th Canadian tour, Toby still took the time to chat with Wanda Waterman about life, songwriting, and the music business.

A Charmed Childhood

Toby's ability to write and perform with such amazing confidence may have developed in the petri dish of a happy, boisterous extended family.

"I was a very lucky child," she remembers, "with loving parents who are still madly in love. There was loads of love in the home. There was camping and holidays and sports and lots of great music—Janis Joplin, The Doors, The Beatles, Queen, Jethro Tull, etc."

She adored school—but not necessarily for the cipherin'. "I mainly loved the social aspect of it," says Toby. "I loved being a part of any social group—any charity group, any music group—anything which meant getting out of the classroom scene for a while!"

Not Another Trained Monkey

Toby wrote her first song at the age of nine. "It was terrible," she says. "I wrote songs all through my teenage years—also depressing and, well, kind of dismal. Then I started writing seriously at around 23 years old."

She studied for a Bachelor of Classical Guitar Performance for two years at the Western Australian Arts Performing Academy, but dropped out short of a degree: "I realized I didn't want to be another trained monkey," she says. Instead, she began to travel and collect experiences. She even joined a children's band called Dragonfly The Funky Fairy Band, where she got to dance around on a stage in a pink tutu, smothered in glitter.

Seeing The Doors

What was her most moving musical experience? “I would probably have to say watching The Doors,” says Toby, “with two original members. It was mind-blowing and I felt like I was right there back in the ’70s. Such powerful music! The Doors have been a favourite for a very long time, so the fact I could stand there and be a part of it all was incredible.”

Twisted Emotional States

Toby has had an extremely tight schedule for the last seven years; she’s performed over 1,000 shows all over the world and released five albums, two live DVDs, and several EPs. But when asked whether or not she considers herself a well-disciplined musician, she’s remarkably self-effacing:

“No, definitely not. I wish the answer were yes. I find it hard to make time for my instrument. With running my own business and touring non-stop, there’s rarely any time free for me. And when I have free time, I like to be with friends or family. So unfortunately the answer is no.”

What does she need in order to be creative? “I’ve written what I consider my best songs when I’m in some twisted emotional state. That’s when I write many songs. They just flow. When I’m in a happy state, I don’t feel like writing. It’s very strange and sometimes very frustrating. These days I’m getting more inspiration from other people’s stories. I think this is what the next album will have a whole lot more of—stories from other people’s points of view.”

Changes

“I think my career has made me more humble, more interested in people, more aware of who I am and how I present myself to the world,” Toby says. “It’s made me learn so much about relationships—mainly with band members, audience members, and love relationships—to be on stage night after night, really making myself vulnerable to a crowd.

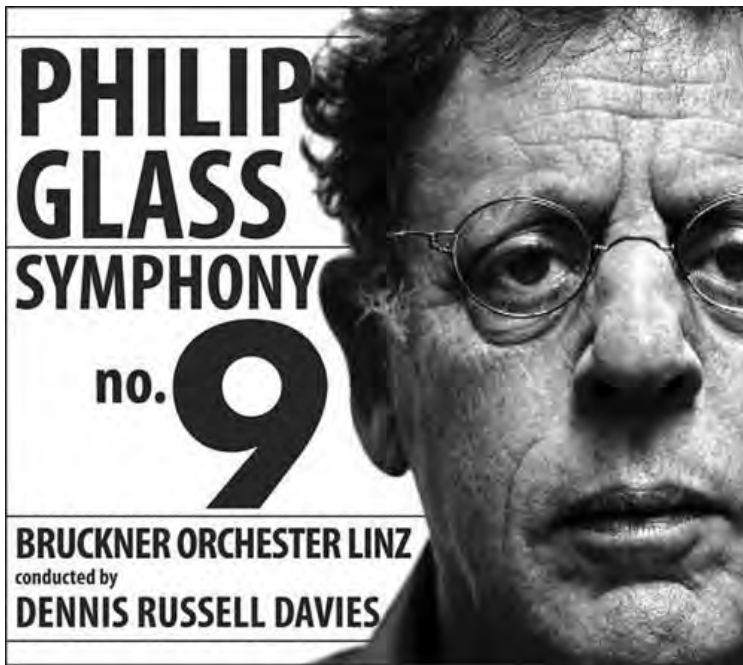
“It’s a full-on thing to do, and you have to be very careful to not let things go to your head, whether it’s from people applauding you and wanting to hang out after your shows and get your autograph, or whether it’s dealing with rejection from people in the music industry. I’ve learned you never know what’s around the corner, so don’t give up and don’t allow this industry to destroy your soul! And mostly, give your all no matter how big or small the crowd is.”

To be continued . . .



GREGOR'S BED

Wanda Waterman



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

Album: Philip Glass, *Symphony No. 9* (2012)

Bruckner Orchester Linz, conducted by Dennis Russell Davies

"Artists do not experiment. Experiment is what scientists do; they initiate an operation of unknown factors to be instructed by its results. An artist puts down what he knows and at every moment it is what he knows at that moment."

Gertrude Stein

Tones That Speak of Thoughts Too Deep for Tears

What would it have been like to be one of Philip Glass's passengers, back when he was a New York cabbie? What would he have talked about? If he'd told you he was writing a symphony, would you have believed him? And even if you had, would you have guessed that he would soon become one of the most important composers of the late 20th century?

Glass's early vocations, as well as his personality—open, frank, and wholesome—are hard to match up with the sometimes grandiose and ponderous work he composes. His father ran a record store in Baltimore and Glass's collection was full of albums that didn't sell, mostly modern composers like Hindemith and Schonberg: music virtually unpalatable to your average record buyer. Although Glass now claims to be more focussed on Bach and Mozart and his work reflects the influence and inspiration of film and literature, the dissonant qualities of his early listening forays have clearly left their mark.

Glass has aimed for classical excellence but in on his own terms, breaking some of the rules of composition in the process. His music has the kind of repetitive structures common to non-Western world music; like Indian music in particular, Glass's work features complex rhythmic patterns that overlap, disguising the transitions.

This symphony has the three-movement structure (a fast first, a slower second, and a fast third movement) common to many serious composers, including Mozart and Haydn; however, Glass also uses parallel fifths, breaking a cardinal rule of composition. The rich dissonance in Glass's compositions has been attributed to the overtones generated by the peculiar intervals between his notes, resulting in a driving, joyful intensity.

Characteristic of most of Glass's work, the movements here begin with oscillating strings that morph into rapidly ascending and descending half-scales. There are fascinating novel touches; one example is the wood blocks that sound like tap dancing pit ponies.

The opening of the second movement has a much different feel than Glass's normal work. It evokes the romantic era and '60s films of the Wild West: the sweeping strings speak of panoramic spaces and open skies and getting the girl. The style is closer to Wagner or Mahler than to Beethoven or Aaron Copeland.

For all its occasional prettiness, Glass's *9th* lacks warmth, but it's teeming with emotive musical statements of fact like we might find in Bach (whom Glass admires): things that if we had to put them in words would comprise terse statements, like *It's all good* (in Bach's case), or (in Glass's) *Trouble's a comin'*.

Glass's *9th Symphony* exhibits an ominous, rising majesty in every bar. It reels in agony and drops only to rise and fight again. It might be described as a dignified cry of grief, but the kind of grief that's both splendid and redemptive.

"When I struck out in my own music language, I took a step out of the world of serious music, according to most of my teachers. But I didn't care. I could row the boat by myself, you know? I didn't need to be on the big liner with everybody else."

Philip Glass

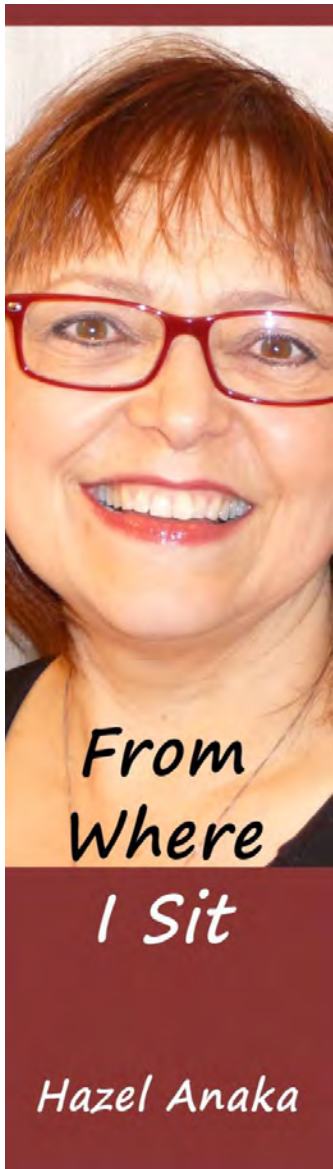


VOICE HOLIDAY

Summer is in full swing. How will you be spending your holidays? At the beach? Sightseeing in the city? Or just curled up with a cold drink and a good novel?

Here at *The Voice* we'll be taking a brief break, too, while we refocus, recharge, and get ready for the next step for *The Voice Magazine*. We're working to make some big changes to the magazine's layout and delivery to keep up with the latest developments in technology and news sharing.

The Voice will be on hiatus from July 23-27, so there will be no issue that week. We'll be back to our regular publishing schedule with the August 3 issue. Meanwhile, keep sending in your comments, letters, and submissions. We always love hearing from our readers!



My Job

In February 2013 I will make a presentation to a women's conference. The topic is Stay-cations. I was approached by one of the organizers because of my work as a writer for a tourism guide.

What I will aim for is a splendid mix of facts, humour, and helpful information—all the things I value in a speaker. I can take any angle I want in the hour-long presentation. All this lead time and freedom I've been given is a gift.

I'm using my time wisely. Because I intend to create a keynote presentation on my new iMac, I've begun taking a lot of photos. Any newspaper or magazine article with pertinent travel facts is being added to a tickle file of ideas. The file has also become a repository for all those fleeting thoughts and bright ideas that drift through a person's brain during mindless activities like mowing the lawn or ironing. A growing collection of travel guides and lure brochures is sprouting up in the house.

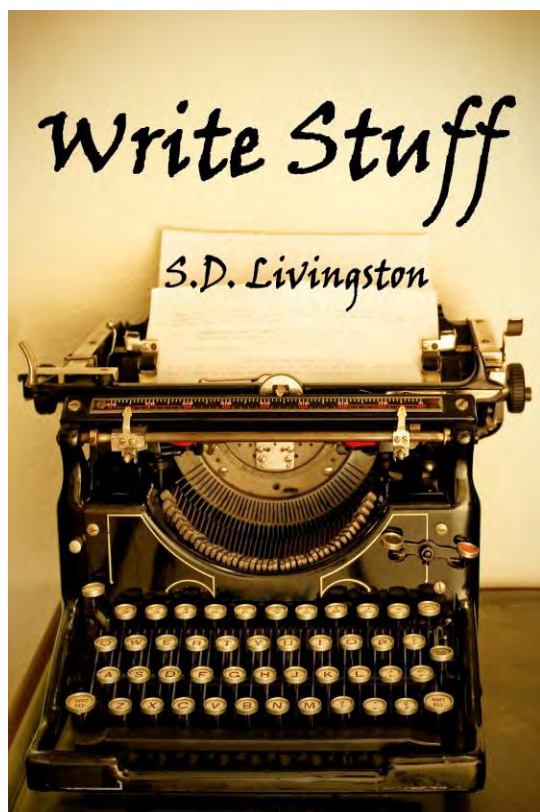
Perhaps what's been most helpful is a new sense of mindfulness of what exists all around us. My antennae are up, and often I'll see something small and think, "Hey, I can use that." Such was the case as we stood in line at a Subway restaurant in Whitecourt. I overheard one woman tell another that she was leaving for a women's camp at Athabasca. According to her, it was toss-up as to what was better: what she would learn and do or the fact there would be no husband or kids for four blessed days. A few days later I heard a snippet of a radio interview about the camp. Naturally, that idea is in the file awaiting more research.

In another instance, we were driving through Whitecourt on our way home from the Ag Service Board Tour that had been hosted by Northern Sunrise County and the Municipal District of Smoky River. It was a working trip for Roy and a great getaway for me, and it took us to parts of Alberta we might never have seen otherwise. It reminded me that from the tiniest hamlet to the largest city or country, there is always something to see, appreciate, and learn.

Did you know that that area produces 40 per cent of Canada's honey? That the Peace River carries 80 per cent of Alberta's water? That bees never sleep and actually wear out their wings in about two months? That McLennan is the bird capital of Canada and that 9,000 trumpeter swans descend on the shallow Kimiwan Lake in October during their annual migration? That Medicine Hat's own Terri Clark will drive 16 hours in a tour bus to put on a helluva concert for 600 people?

Don't feel badly; neither did I. But that's the beauty of travel, at home or abroad: the fresh look at life and its people. My job is to convey that message to a room full of women, from where I sit.

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



Cover Girls

Headlines about classic lit don't usually include words like sexy, lure, and teens. But a recent ABC News article used just such provocative language in a piece about updating classic book covers. Are literary classics being sexed up to grab young readers? No, and any controversy in that headline is more like a fairy tale.

To start with, one look at the supposedly sexy covers reveals that they're anything but. The cover of *Romeo and Juliet*, for example, features the lovestruck teens fully clothed and gazing longingly into each other's eyes. Juliet's wearing a flower garland and long skirt, with the result that she's more fresh-faced Woodstock attendee than sultry seductress.

And the modern young Pip on the cover of *Great Expectations* is no bare-chested Casanova with a brooding stare. Instead, he's a slightly mournful-looking young man who seems more Beat poet than teenaged Mellors. And *Wuthering Heights*? It features a close-up of a rose and the claim that the classic tale is "Bella and Edward's favorite book." Yes, that Bella and Edward—the couple that took virginal angst and longing into multiple-sequel territory.

Still, it's tempting to guard against changing the classics. They attained that status for a reason. It might be for their literary quality, or simply because they hit the right long-ago market at the right time and became (regardless of quality) entrenched in the Western canon. Whatever the reason, their original covers often speak volumes—through colour, typeface, and design—about society at the time they were written.

But that's never been a convincing argument for leaving initial cover designs in place over the years. In fact, most of the covers we associate with the classics don't look anything like their originals. Like this original version of Lewis Carroll's *Alice in Wonderland*, from 1865, which is worlds away from the many others that followed.

Or this oddly cell-like cover on the first Russian edition of Leo Tolstoy's *Anna Karenina* from 1878; it doesn't have quite the same celebrity appeal as this 1948 version featuring Vivian Leigh. (One interesting side note is that the first English edition, published in 1886, contained ads in both the front and back of the book.)

"[Book] covers, shapes, sizes, and even bindings have a long history of being updated to appeal to contemporary audiences—whether 'contemporary' means 1953 or 2012. The latest crop of updates simply follows that tradition."

The point is that book covers, shapes, sizes, and even bindings have a long history of being updated to appeal to contemporary audiences—whether “contemporary” means 1953 or 2012. The latest crop of updates simply follows that tradition.

It seems, then, there’s no need for concern about sexy book covers luring teens into classic literature. As for using provocative headlines to bolster click rates—well, on that point I’m not so sure.

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!).

CLICK OF THE WRIST

Camping

Air conditioning and creature comforts are all very well and good—but sometimes summer brings the siren call of nature, and we’re seized with the urge to abandon civilization and live outdoors for a while. Whether you prefer a luxurious “glamping” experience, remote locations, or something in between, click through this week’s links for advice and entertainment.

What to Bring

Outdoor outfitter REI has put together an extensive camping supply checklist—with the caveat that not all campers will have the same needs! For a customizable (if shorter), printable checklist, click [here](#).

Beware the Bear

Heading to bear territory? Whether you’re roughing it backcountry or pulling up to a pre-existing campsite, this field guide has some good tips for hiking and camping in an area frequented by bears.

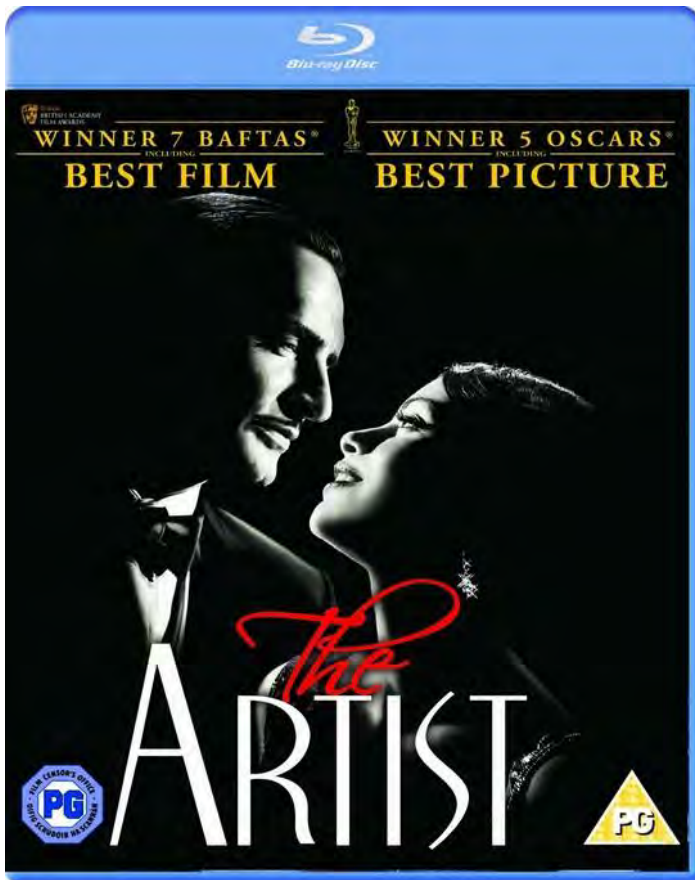
Glamping

Not everyone’s into the dirt and bug side of camping, but they may still want the chance to commune with nature a little more closely. This has led to a branch of tourism known as “glamping”: enjoying the outdoors in luxuriously furnished teepees, yurts, and tents. Turkish rugs and [gourmet catered meals](#), anyone?



THE MINDFUL BARD

Wanda Waterman



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

Film: *The Artist* (The Weinstein Co. 2011)

Writer/Director: Michel Hazanavicius

Cast: Jean Dujardin, Bérénice Bejo, John Goodman, James Cromwell, Penelope Ann Miller, Malcolm McDowell, Missi Pyle

Genre: Romantic comedy

"Love, being dependent on the relative absence of narcissism, requires the development of humility, objectivity and reason."

Erich Fromm, *The Art of Loving*

Film as Pilgrimage—or Escape?

George Valentin is a silent screen star. He's so full of himself that he looks like an ass sometimes, but

audiences adore him and shower him with the adulation he craves. His charisma wins him the love of a perky young thing whose career, partly due to his good offices, quickly surpasses his (*she* at least is willing to talk out loud).

In 1927, the talkies replace the silent screen. George is encouraged to continue his movie career as a talking actor, but the first time he sees a talkie he laughs at what he sees as the sheer absurdity of it. No, George does *not* wish to speak on film. He wants to go on expressing feelings and thoughts through gestures, postures, and facial expressions, leaving the words to the intertitles.

It's tempting to see George Valentin, a thinly veiled spoof of Rudolph Valentino, as symbolic of the transience of the silent film age. But on a broader scale, Valentin represents film itself, or rather that element of the commercial film industry that's consciously and deliberately escapist, that wouldn't stand still for a profound spiritual epiphany if you paid it to. He refuses to speak because the human voice is the universally accepted vessel for communicating the true self to the world; George Valentin, if he even has a true self, is completely disconnected from it and would like it to stay that way, thank you very much.

There is something in movies that prefers the silently moving jaws, that longs to express itself with every means *but* speech. This is why it's often possible to watch films in a language you don't know, and yet still grasp what's going on without even reading the subtitles—the visual and aural cues can be as revelatory as words.

This film was a puzzler at first. It was hard, after having watched a number of films that portrayed the unjust suppression of freedom of speech, to watch a film in which a man was given the freedom to speak and refused it. Since the time of John the Baptist, silencing someone has been tantamount to beheading—in other words, a removal of the true self.

But George Valentin is a narcissist. He doesn't know who he really he is and doesn't want to know; he's content with seeing his reflection in the eyes of admiring fans. This is all that he requires to assure himself that he exists and is worthy of love. With him the suppression of verbal expression is intentional.

This is Hollywood's dilemma. On the one hand, movies have a huge capacity to express the anxieties and confusions of the age and have thus been granted the power to, as Francesco Casetti explains, negotiate reality for the viewing public. On the other hand, film exhibits an urge to do no more than to distract and entertain, to run from problems and to escape into romance and pleasure (Valentin's only spoken line in the film is, tellingly, *"Mon plaisir."*).

"Sometimes people don't want the deep goods; they just want their basic needs met. This awful truth has burned out many a social activist . . . and it puts film at odds with itself, pitting the desire to negotiate positive change against the desire to create a diversion from the very things that need to change."

This idea of the incongruity of the two sides of the film industry coin is beautifully expressed in *The Artist's* recreation of the silent film format. It's a remarkable achievement, especially in a movie that on the surface looks like conventional film fluff, the kind of thing our grandparents watched to forget about the Depression and the war. From *The Artist*:

DORIS: I'm unhappy, George.

VALENTIN: So are millions of us.

The fact that it has emerged now casts some light on the tenor of our times. Illusions are like comfort food—generally devoid of the nutrients needed for long-term health, but providing needed calories and a sense of contentment that carries us through hard times. We've always counted on the film industry to give us candy to suck on to stop us from crying.

It's like in the movie *True Stories*, when John Goodman (who also incidentally appears in *The Artist*) sings, *"People like us, we don't want justice. We don't want freedom. We just want someone to love."* At the end of *The Artist* this voiceless element survives in the form of a dance that celebrates a successful escape from meaning.

Sometimes people don't want the deep goods; they just want their basic needs met. This awful truth has burned out many a social activist (and socially conscious artist), and it puts film at odds with itself, pitting the desire to negotiate positive change against the desire to create a diversion from the very things that need to change.

"Let me tell you what I just heard. Talk, talk, talk, I. Talk, talk, talk, I. Well, what about me?"

Gena Showalter, *The Darkest Seduction*

Love is what in the end unites the two, allowing George to continue entertaining speechlessly, even as the talkies effectively replace silent film.

The Artist manifests six 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 is about attainment of the true self; and 6) it makes me appreciate that life is a complex and rare phenomenon, making living a unique opportunity.

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

DID YOU KNOW?

AU's Advising Services



For first-time students, program selection and planning are significant undertakings. But even if you're well on your way to earning that degree or certificate, it's important to revisit and revise your program plan continuously to keep up with changing interests and circumstances.

It's easy to get bogged down in the confusing swirl of prerequisites, program requirements, and transfer credit. Fortunately, AU's Advising Services is there to help.

The advisors, who are available by phone, email, and in person at one of AU's Centres, "can assist you in areas ranging from clarifying your undergraduate program requirements, to helping choose the next course for your program of studies." They also can answer your questions about "university regulations and procedures" as well as "transfer credit evaluation." Special academic advising is also available for specific programs.

For more information, visit the Advising Services page, or fill out the online contact form.

INTERNATIONAL NEWS DESK



At Home: Couch Potato

We all know that kids today tend to watch too much TV—and that this habit promotes a sedentary lifestyle. But did you know that it can also affect their longer-term physical development?

As the CBC reports, a recent study from the University of Montreal shows that “[children] who watch more TV between the ages of two and four may increase their risk of having a large waist size and weaker muscular fitness by the end of grade 4.”

Although the American Academy of Pediatrics recommends fewer than two hours of television per day for kids over the age of two, the study found that the average kindergarten-aged child watched nearly 15 hours of TV per week.

And the effects on health are significant: according to the study, “a child who watches 18 hours of television at 4.5 years of age will by the age of 10 have an extra 7.6 millimetres” in waist size. Additionally, kids who watched more TV exhibited a decreased ability in the standing long jump—a test that’s seen as “an indicator of health and points to someone’s athletic ability for activities like skating and sprinting or sports such as basketball and soccer that require explosive leg strength.”

Around the World: Bad Weather Blues

As we become more and more out of touch with the clues nature gives us, we increasingly rely on online or televised weather forecasts—and we’re not happy if the predictions are inaccurate. But in one Dutch tourist town, councillors are taking this to a new level.

As the CBC reports, councillors in Hoek van Holland, The Netherlands, “want to slap weather forecasters with fines if their predictions turn out to be incorrect.”

Forecasts of bad weather cause tourists to cancel reservations; but if the weekend turns out to be sunny after all, tourism vendors have lost that good-weather business.

The Royal Netherlands Meteorological Institute is taking the heat for the inaccurate forecasts, and hotel owners and others in the tourism industry insist that their errors are causing “considerable damage” to the industry, a spokesperson for a tourist association told reporters.

Sounds like a case of (sorry) fair-weather friends.

AUSU UPDATE



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

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Editor-In-Chief Tamra Ross
Managing Editor Christina M. Frey

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

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