

THE VOICE

MAGAZINE

Vol 20 Iss 29 2012-08-03

Becoming Busy

Seeking peace and quiet

Grand Opening

How it all begins

Sister, Brother

Talent and torment

*Plus:
Gregor's Bed
From Where I Sit
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



The Eternal Silence of the Focussed Mind

Every year, I find myself writing about quiet.

Sometimes it's a brush with nature that sets into motion a craving for silence, for a relief from the frenzied bustle of human-created activity. Sometimes it's a sudden appreciation for the peaceful background noise that surrounds us—that so-called “white noise” that is as much a part of the fabric of our surroundings as the paint on the walls or the smooth paneling of the desk. But the longing to write about it seems to recur, and why shouldn't it?

The need for silence is written on the human heart, and whether we seek it within sunlit rooms or the dimness of the forest our minds may be restless and undecided until we find it. I'd always thought that silence somehow required the absence of noise, the removal of anything technological, and the blandness of white walls or green leaves.

This year, I discovered something new: it is possible to find quiet in busyness.

Does that sound like a contradiction? It's not as far-fetched as you might think. Have you ever started working on some project—home renovating, art, writing, gardening—only to find out that hours had passed without your realization? Have you ever gone for a run, or danced, or played the violin, working or playing with such drive and intensity that your mind cleared of worries? Has an afternoon of yard work or yoga somehow given you perspective on a big decision you had to make?

Sometimes when we seek silence we focus too hard on eliminating outside distractions: no radio, no phone, and especially no Internet, that oft-maligned “source of all ills.” But interior distractions—worries, fears, decision-making, and the jumbled thoughts of *what should I do, what will I do, how will I do it*—are just as bad. In fact, we can create the quietest environment possible, yet still won't find there the silence we need. Outer quiet isn't always the answer.

Trying to do nothing and expecting that somehow the silence we're basking in will illuminate us can be an exercise in futility when it's not what we're really seeking. On the other hand, deep involvement with just one task or project is often a wonderful source of contentment and clarity.

Fully immersing ourselves in anything is a lost art. We're plagued by distractions from both outside and within. I'm researching something, and I'll get an email alert—or the phone will ring—or perhaps I'll take a quick break and meander onto Facebook. I'll see a spill on the carpet and go clean it. It's time to pay that

bill. I need a snack. My blog has 67 drafts in its folder. My browser has nine tabs up, and I've got seven files open. And that's on the low side of my norm. Distracted much?

The other day, exhausted from several days of travelling, camping, and hiking, I spent the afternoon with my laptop, doing a bit of house-hunting online. It sounds boring. It sounds pathetic, actually. Who spends her vacation doing stuff like that?

And yet it was exactly what I'd needed.

All the hubbub of our recent move, home sale, and driving meant that I had far too many tabs open in my mind. That afternoon, for a few hours, everything else was closed while I zeroed in on *just one thing*.

I felt as drained as though I'd run a marathon—but perhaps as elated, because I'd finally, finally gotten a break. It was refreshing, better than any hike I'd taken or novel I'd read recently.

“[Deep] involvement with just one task or project is often a wonderful source of contentment and clarity.”

The summertime, that brief respite before fall brings its more hectic schedule, is the ideal time to take some space and clear our minds. Instead of seeking solitude, consider spending a few hours focussing on a task, activity, or hobby. You might find it's as therapeutic as days and days in the woods.

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](#).

IN CONVERSATION WITH . . .

Wanda Waterman



Toby Beard, Part II

Toby Beard is a singer-songwriter from Perth, Australia. Now on her 11th tour of Canada, she's performed at major festivals all over the world, supporting notables like Sheryl Crow and John Cougar Mellencamp. Toby recently recorded her fifth album, *Coming Home*. (Read Part I of this interview [here](#).)

"It's time to dream a new dream; it's time to get some sleep.

It's time to put myself back on the mountain peak,

Stop looking backwards and take a whole new stride.

It's time I look at myself with a little pride.

I wanna say, 'Welcome back to the good old days . . .'"

Toby Beard, "Good Old Days"

The Care and Feeding of a Singer-Songwriter's Soul

Lyrics, tunes, and musical arrangements don't emerge from a vacuum. So where does Toby turn for inspiration in her down time? "I'm a big Paulo Coelho fan," she says. "As for music, Tracey Chapman's first album has always been a massive inspiration. Also the Waifs' first album. Hearing these female singers led me to believe that I could do it, too. This week I've been listening to Indian music from the CD *Sacred Spirit*, Crowded House, Ani DiFranco, Ray Charles, and The Beatles."

Her hectic performing schedule necessitates a careful management of down time. Because it takes Toby so long to calm down after a show, she tries to be kind to herself. "I need to just chill, have long showers, and talk about the ups and the downs of the show. My down time is spent just being with the people I love."

It's certainly not the life of your typical Australian debutante, so a life of comfortable apathy is out of the question. Has Toby's career changed her?

"Yes!" she exclaims. "I tend to hear more now and listen more, and I think it's because I tell my stories to people and they tend to tell me theirs. This has opened my eyes to what other people experience in their lives, and it's opened me up to how huge this amazing world is, to watching and learning and listening and taking in my surroundings."

Writing a Song

Hearing other people's stories also provides more fodder for her songwriting, inspiring her and giving her more to think about. Her personal songwriting process is natural and organic:

“There is no set process; it simply happens. I sit, I start strumming, and words spew out of my mouth. This is the only way it works for me in general. It has to be the right place and time and feeling. For me, as soon as it’s forced, it just won’t be a great song. A few songs have been a process of music first, then, sometimes years later, the right lyrics come to me. But mainly it all happens at once, as if it’s been just sitting in my mind waiting to jump out.”

More Spiritual than Religious

Toby doesn’t feel that she owes her artistic gifts to ideology or belief. “To be brutally honest, I’m not really a political or religious person. I believe there’s something like a universal god out there, but I wouldn’t even call it a god—I’d call it a force. I’m way more spiritual than I am religious. It’s not that I’m against religion; it’s just what works for me. I believe you meet your soul people over and over again in the different lives you live.”

“I tend to hear more now and listen more . . . This has opened my eyes to what other people experience in their lives, and it’s opened me up to how huge this amazing world is . . .”

Toby Beard

Echoes of Etta James

Etta James came very close to being one of these “soul people” for Toby, whose musical journey once brought her into the inner circle of the blues legend.

“I actually worked with her band members and her manager—not Etta, unfortunately. But seeing her live was amazing and it was her last show, and somehow I knew this straight away. That show was fabulous to watch . . . her band is made up of amazing musicians—so humble and talented and lovely to be around. I worked with her piano player, David Matthews, on my album, plus her trumpet player, Mike Almos. Both were just amazing to work with.”

Canadian Tour

Toby’s open and friendly nature also resonates with Canadian audiences. “I love Canada, so I love my experiences here. Canadians are such friendly, warm, and welcoming people, and that makes me feel so lucky. The tour is a quick one, just a whirlwind fly in and out, but I’m enjoying it for sure. I have a new band again and we’re working so well together. It’s my first time working with slide guitar, which is beautiful, and also the harmonies from my band are just sounding beautiful.”

What’s Next?

In spite of enduring a hectic touring schedule, Toby has found the space in which to fashion some life goals that for her look pretty achievable: “I want to keep doing what I do, to spread my music far and wide, to get an incredible manager, to be on the world festival circuit, to finally have that radio hit, and to keep enjoying what I do. That last one is the most important part of my future—enjoyment and satisfaction on a personal level.”

So what’s next for Toby? “Next, home! Finally, after a six-week tour and thirty shows (Europe as well). But . . . I’ll be going straight back into touring Australia, then back here for your summers. No rest for the wicked!”

GREGOR'S BED

Wanda Waterman



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

"Basie was never really commonplace—he was always measures ahead.

Ellington was more than number one for the music and things that he said.

Bird was the word back when tenors were heard

from Kansas right up to the pres (Lester Young)

Billie was really the queen of the scene that keeps echoing on in my head.

What it has will surely last, but is that jazz?"

Gil Scott-Heron, "Is That Jazz?"

Blowing the Status Quo from Its Comfort Zone with a Voice as Sweet and Dark as Shoo-fly Pie

Album: Giacomo Gates, *The Revolution Will Be Jazz: The Songs of Gil Scott-Heron*

Gil Scott-Heron's status as an American cultural icon is primarily based on his early '70s spoken word recording "The Revolution Will Not be Televised," a weighty but thrilling prophecy influencing scores of young folks to shrug off their culturally imposed ignorance and apathy and dedicate themselves to positive social change.

One of these young people, record producer Mark Ruffin, recently got a hankering to produce an album covering Scott-Heron jazz songs in the vocalese baritone style that Gil had exemplified. Baritone Giacomo Gates was the perfect fit. Also appropriate: the fact that he was a veteran of years of remarkable jazz achievements, had rubbed shoulders with jazz greats (Sarah Vaughan was one mentor), and possessed a deeply rooted beatnik aesthetic.

Gil created almost two dozen albums in his lifetime, but when Gates was going through the *oeuvre* picking the songs for this new album he steered away from the better-known ditties and reduced his selection to a collection of songs notable for their subtle but pointed social commentary.

It's evident from the first listen that these were the songs that Gates knew he could sing with sincerity; when he sings it's as if he means every word, identifies with the sentiments expressed in these lyrics, and is wholeheartedly behind them.

And so we have on this album a critique of consumerism ("Madison Avenue"), a song about the false glamour of the entertainment industry ("Show Bizness"), a prayer for universal freedom ("This Is A Prayer

For Everybody To Be Free”), hymns to jazz legends (“Lady Day And John Coltrane” and “Is That Jazz”), and a call to self-realization (“It’s Your World”). If you feel the urge to give up your art and enroll in law school, give this disk a spin. It might just wake you up.

Yes, these songs were written in the 1970s. And yes, the band swings (*boy*, do they swing) with classic cool jazz evocative of the early ’70s, seasoned with funk, barrelhouse piano, fusion, and some fine free jazz passages rendered exquisite by the firm musical structures framing them. There’s an extremely expressive and playful flute on several tracks, and when the bass starts walking you’ll want to follow it all around the churchyard.

As Giacomo explained in a recent phone conversation, some Americans still feel threatened by the songs of Gil Scott-Heron even though he says nothing overtly threatening. If certain white folks could get past their false sense that the protests of African-American activists are somehow a threat to them personally, they’d find much edification in these songs, which in essence are telling us to toss our unexamined lives and really start living.

What was scary and new about Gil was that this guy could see the truth and wasn’t afraid to say it. Even in traditional jazz this mindset will always be avant-garde because of how it swells up, bursts the walls, and then puts the house back together again. Gil Scott-Heron was a social critic; the fact that he was black made his art more frightening to the status quo even as it made it more relevant to the construction of a just society.

“Gil Scott-Heron was a social critic; the fact that he was black made his art more frightening to the status quo even as it made it more relevant to the construction of a just society.”

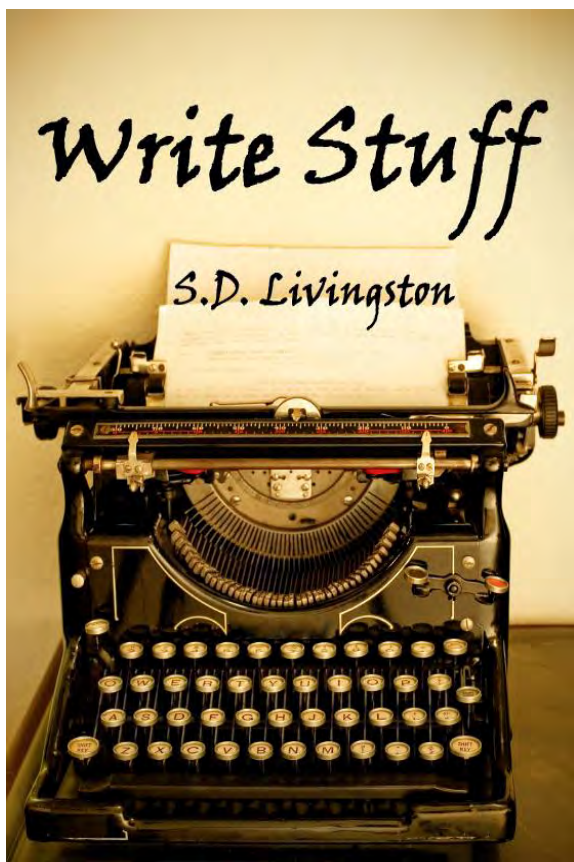
AN APP FOR THAT

In this new series, we’ll profile cool smart phone apps that you just might not want to live without.

SkyWeek Plus

If you’re keen on amateur astronomy—or just don’t want to miss the Perseid meteor shower again—download *Sky and Telescope* magazine’s SkyWeek Plus app. Users get sky charts, weekly roundups, and alerts about important astronomical news, but best of all is the calendar feature: with a few swipes you can add celestial events to your phone’s calendar and get reminders so you don’t forget to go outdoors and observe.

A few notes: SkyWeek Plus is synched to star charts in the northern hemisphere only. It is available in Apple iTunes for \$2.99 and is compatible with iPhones and iPads (Android users can download the free basic SkyWeek app, which includes star charts and weekly updates.)



Grand Opening

It's the stuff of literary legend and as elusive as a yeti: the perfect opening line. Writers often struggle for months to craft that perfect string of words, that crucial hook on which a story succeeds or fails. But does it really? A look at some great books shows that the best is sometimes saved for last.

As with so many legends, the opening line's near-mythic importance has grown well beyond reality. An Internet search for best opening lines turns up countless top 10 lists, and even experienced writers can fall prey to the fable. A recent *Globe and Mail* [article](#) reveals that, to many, "no line counts more than the first."

There's no denying that between Jane Austen's truths universally acknowledged and Daphne du Maurier's dreams of Manderley, many writers have created opening lines that reverberate with wit and energy and mystery. Sentences that grab us in as few as three words ("Call me Ishmael") and overflow with the promise that the book goes on to fulfil.

Yet some of the most powerful novels ever written begin with plain vanilla sentences—sentences that are dull and pedestrian enough to come straight out of a grade school reader.

Like the opening to William Golding's *Lord of the Flies*: "The boy with fair hair lowered himself down the last few feet of rock and began to pick his way toward the lagoon." Interesting, sure (what's he doing by a lagoon?), but it hardly blinds the reader with a stroke of literary brilliance. It could as easily be the opening to a story about a boy on a dull summer vacation instead of a primal struggle for survival.

Then there's the opening line in *Of Mice and Men*, a spare, compact novel that's a rich study of human nature. If it were true that "no line counts more than the first," Steinbeck's gem should never have become a classic after this intro: "A few miles south of Soledad, the Salinas River drops in close to the hillside bank and runs deep and green."

The problem, of course, has nothing to do with those opening lines themselves. It has to do with the unrealistic expectations we place on them. By perpetuating the cult of the perfect opening, readers and writers alike do themselves a disservice. Impatient, we skim the first words, maybe the first paragraph. If it doesn't immediately grab us, we set the book aside. We don't dig deeper to find the gems that might be waiting behind the mundane front door.

The gems aren't always there, of course. And a few pages are usually enough to decide whether to move on to the next book in the pile.

But if millions of readers had left that boy on the beach, if they'd decided that Golding's first line didn't meet some magical, mythical standard, they might never have come to know that "Ralph wept for the end of innocence, the darkness of man's heart, and the fall through the air of the true, wise friend called Piggy."

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

Athletic Feats

Think Olympic stadiums are the only venues for great athletic feats? Think again; adventurers all over the world are engaging in long-distance cycling, swimming, and running events in which the only awards might be personal achievement. Read these athletes' stories and give them a little recognition:

Crossing Lake Ontario

Speed swimming takes strength and coordination, but long-distance swimming requires a completely different set of skills. Lake Ontario, with its heavy winds and treacherous waves, is considered one of the three most difficult swims in the world. Recently Oakville, Ontario resident Madhu Naharaja completed the swim successfully—only the 50th person to do so—after being in the water for 24 hours!

Rickshaw Cycling to the Olympics

After watching the closing ceremonies in Beijing in 2008, a Chinese farmer "was inspired to travel to the next host city for the Games by the only way he could afford – rickshaw," the BBC reports. He left in 2010 and arrived in London this past month, after just over two years full of adventures. His goal? To carry a "message of peace and environmental protection."

A Piece of History

To celebrate the centennial of the Amundsen-Scott race to the South Pole, adventurers took part in a similar race this past January. This interview gives an idea of just what it takes to travel in the harshest environment on earth.

Canadian Death Race

125 kilometres in 24 hours—over three mountains and one river? No wonder it's called the Canadian Death Race! Yet on Saturday, 1200 people will gather in Grand Cache, Alberta, to take part in it. Read through these interviews for a glimpse at the motivation and fortitude of the runners.



THE MINDFUL BARD

Wanda Waterman



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

"Never be bullied into silence. Never allow yourself to be made a victim. Accept no one's definition of your life, but define yourself."

Harvey Fierstein

Film: *Mozart's Sister* (2011)

Director: René Féret

Cast: Marie Féret, Marc Barbé, Delphine Chuillot, David Moreau

The Solemn Dignity of the Silenced Muse

Who am I? I risk everything to acquire the knowledge necessary to my art, skulking between rooms to overhear lessons taught those deemed more worthy than me. I'm a fun-loving romper and a paragon of elegance. I fool those who cling to illusion and reveal myself to those who long for truth from their hearts.

I'm protected and hedged in by family, church, and society, and I can't quite claim that this is a bad thing for me. The danger that I will be exploited or assaulted or even that my special gifts and powers will be destroyed by the moral dissolution to which those like me are vulnerable, is very real. I can't with conviction claim, like Hester Prynne, to be the devotee of a morality that transcends convention. But others turn to me for their salvation, telling me to seek joy in renouncing my own desires. How can I possibly save them?

I'm sympathetic with the plight of the aristocracy and quickly enter their hearts; they too, because of their power to affect and influence society, are manipulated and suppressed by those wanting to wield power through them.

I represent the feminine, gentle, acquiescent aspect of the artistic character and show no rancor toward my volatile and rebellious brother, my liberated evil twin—not even when the world decides that it'll be he and not I to whom it will listen.

"Artistic temperament sometimes seems a battleground, a dark angel of destruction and a bright angel of creativity wrestling."

Madeleine L'Engle

Maria Anne Mozart (nicknamed Nannerl) was Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart's elder sister. She accompanied him on their concert tours, and there's ample evidence that she may have been as gifted as her famous brother. She could have had the same potential had her father encouraged and supported her gift as he did with young Wolfgang's.



At first glance this looks like just another facile examination of female inequality within a patriarchal culture, but it's more complicated than that. Nannerl's problem is really just a microcosm of the problem of civilization, as seen from the point of view of the excluded (or marginalized) artist. This is really brought home by the gravity of actress Marie F  ret, the director's daughter, who holds herself aloof from the displays of emotion that would have rendered her more realistic but less authentic.

It is true that the filmmakers took liberties with the facts, though the costumes and interiors are historically precise and evocative of the 18th century. The unreality of this drama owes itself to the fact that Nannerl is a highly symbolic character in spite of the vivid quality of this cinematography.

In fact, knowledge of the true story can seriously hinder one's comprehension of this particular interpretation of the reality. It's a leap, for example, to sympathize with the onscreen portrayal of Nannerl when we know that in real life she didn't suffer the poverty, illness, and personal disappointments of her younger brother. And that, like Wolfgang, she had the benefit of a loving if slightly over-ambitious family in addition to an obviously superlative education from their father, Leopold.

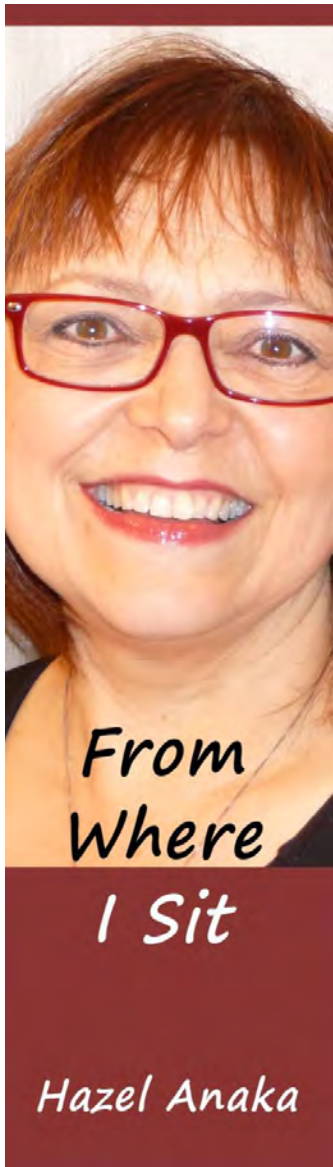
Yet all that was most precious was taken from her—creative expression, choice of spouse, freedom of movement, even her one biological surviving son. One might argue that her sex made her a victim, but this is not the case; her famous brother paid heavy penalties for thwarting the will of those bent on directing the course of his life.

Ultimately art brings not peace but a sword, and those who choose it choose conflict.

Mozart's Sister manifests five of the Mindful Bard's criteria for films well worth seeing: 1) it is authentic, original, and delightful; 2) it provides respite from a sick and cruel world, a respite enabling me to renew myself for a return to mindful artistic endeavour; 3) it is about attainment of the true self; 4) it displays an engagement with and compassionate response to suffering; and 5) it makes me want to be a better artist.



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.



Observations from a Funeral

The other day I attended my uncle's funeral. Even though we hadn't seen each other for years, I had a soft spot for him. He was spunky and vibrant, in excellent health, and had a reputation as a straight talker who wouldn't suffer fools. The photograph on his memorial booklet—showing him grinning with a line of nine fish—perfectly captured his zest for life.

He was the kind of guy who would write his own eulogy, and did. I was grateful for that, because it documented a long life of service, adventure, and productivity, like his military service in World War II and his career as a rehabilitation worker at some of Edmonton's best hospitals. We learned that he married Alice one week after meeting her. Now, 69 years later, death has separated them.

He died in his sleep at the age of 95. That sounds so peaceful and Hollywood until you hear that he recently had had a leg amputated and was in a lot of pain. My dad, his brother, passed away in 1995 at age 83. Uncle Metro was my dad's last surviving sibling (out of a family of thirteen).

With his passing comes a bit of guilt for me. Because my uncle's mind had remained clear, I always intended to visit him and pick his brain for family memories. I'm sorry and ashamed to admit it never happened. Hell, I didn't do it with my own dad and have yet to do it with my mother, who's still alive.

Why do we let things like that slide? What is it in our nature that lets us take the easier path? Or believe we have all the time in the world?

The refreshments and fellowship in the funeral home lounge after the somewhat skimpy service were good. Because my dad was 20 years older than my mom, all of the relatives on his side are so much older. My cousins are old enough to be my parents. Many of them are gone now, too.

It was fun to catch up with the relatives who were there and realize that no matter how or where people live, there are commonalities in the life experience. Three of the women at my table were widows. The issues of downsizing, decluttering, dealing with grown children, and looking for another love are universal. When one widow said she is juggling three "friends," naturally I mentioned my services as a marriage commissioner!

It seems that most of us are spending a lot of time, energy, and money on those tinctures, supplements, and behaviours that promise to lengthen and enrich our lives. And it seems to be working. That part of my family has longevity on its side, too. There is a lot of diabetes, but no Alzheimer's as far as I know. Given a choice I'd rather have my faculties, 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: Beehive

Fresh local honey is being snapped up at city markets and rural co-ops. People are seeking out farmers, and the hobby of beekeeping is growing. But not all sources of fresh honey are ideal, as one Ontario couple found out recently.

As the *Toronto Sun* [reports](#), the Yates family was unexpectedly greeted by honey dripping through cracks in their kitchen ceiling.

Although the Yates had not realized it, bees had set up colonies “between the main-floor ceiling and the floor of the upper level over the kitchen.” Beekeepers estimate that a staggering

180,000 honey bees and “a nest of nasty yellow jacket wasps” were hiding among the partitions, which they believed might hold up to 2,000 pounds of honey.

Until the honey dripping began, there was no indication of the unwelcome guests. “We don’t hear them buzzing,” Loretta Yates told reporters. They plan to “rid their house of the unwanted pests” as soon as possible, as the family is concerned that the ceilings, already “leaking honey,” may crack further and cause the bees to swarm.

A local beekeeper will “pull down the ceiling . . . and remove the honey which he hopes can be saved.” He’ll also locate the queen bees and remove them to a wooden hive box, which will attract the rest of their colonies to them.

Around the World: Payback Time

How long can a debt remain unpaid? In the case of one forgotten historical debt, long hidden in regional archives, the answer might be 450 years—and the total, adjusted for inflation, could be astronomical.

As the *Huffington Post* [reports](#), “[the] sleepy hamlet of Mittenwalde in eastern Germany could become one of the richest towns in the world if Berlin were to repay it an outstanding debt that dates back to 1562.”

The certificate of debt was found by a Mittenwalde historian and is believed to be authentic. It states that the small town “lent Berlin 400 guilders on May 28 1562, to be repaid with six percent interest per year.”

With interest and inflation adjustments, that total “now lies in the trillions,” according to estimates by Radio Berlin Brandenburg.

The Mittenwalde mayor “tried to ask Berlin for [the] money back,” but the cash-strapped capital offered the town a “historical guilder” as a token.

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.

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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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Classifieds are free for AU students! Contact voice@voicemagazine.org for more information.

THE VOICE

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