

THE VOICE

MAGAZINE

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Red Line Blues

The editor question

Stand Tall

Rethink your desk

Arab Autumn

Tunisians speak

Plus:

*From Where I Sit
The Mindful Bard
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.



STUDY SPACE

Christina M. Frey



Take a Stand

This article is adapted from the original, first published July 15, 2011, in issue 1926.

The sky is sunny and the temperature's warm—and your new box of course materials has just arrived. So why aren't you feeling more motivated?

Although many students continue their course work during the summer, the vibe is often more relaxed. Hot weather, cold drinks, and visits, vacations, and day trips eat into your routines, and why wouldn't they? Whether you're working, studying, or both, thinking about spending hours hunched over a desk is pretty depressing when the outdoors—be it beach, fishing pier, mountains, or forest—is beckoning.

Consider starting the new school year off right by pulling yourself up out of your summer slump—literally—and trying out a standing desk.

Standing desks, which are designed to be at an appropriate height for working while standing, have become a bit of a fad in the business world. But they have a long history, not to mention more than a few famous devotees. Charles Dickens, Ernest Hemingway, Virginia Woolf, and Sir Winston Churchill all used standing desks, and their example is followed by politicians, leaders, and visionaries.

A commonly cited reason is the health benefits. The dangers of a sedentary life are well established, and standing allows you to maintain a higher metabolism, burn calories, improve your posture, and engage your core. But there's an even bigger reason to try taking a stand: it may give your productivity a boost.

Studies have shown that regularly changing your work environment is a boon to productivity (and helps keep boredom at bay). But won't standing actually create a more distraction-prone environment?

Actually, that's not borne out in practice. Sitting hunched forward in the chair, eyes ahead, it's easy to space out a bit, lose focus, or over-fixate on issues that aren't going anywhere. And if you're already easily distracted, sitting contributes to boredom because it doesn't engage you physically or mentally.

Standing, on the other hand, gives you something small to focus on physically, leaving your brain free to zero in exclusively on your book or screen. You no longer feel the unspoken need to seek out something else to do.

Interestingly, educators who work with children with ADHD or similar learning challenges have found that when these kids work standing, they're able to stay on track better than when seated. As this *U.S. News & World Report* article notes, "standing [enhances] focus and attention"—something especially challenging for kids with ADHD or ADD. Some schools are even implementing desks with attached treadmills or stationary bicycles to give an additional outlet for their energy.

It's not only kids with learning challenges whose concentration is improved by using a standing desk. One innovative school in Minnesota has implemented "activity-permissive" learning, which means that kids

can choose whether to sit, stand, or do a little of each. The students are being studied by a team from the University of Minnesota, but in the meantime teachers believe the setting will allow the kids to “focus better on their work rather than focusing on how to keep still.”

The same follows for adults. As one formerly seated blogger [notes](#), while seated “my posture was terrible, my attention span was narrowing rapidly, and I was constantly battling fatigue.” But after moving to a standing desk, it was easier to focus longer and better, and problems seemed less frustrating.

In fact, using a standing desk may even enhance creativity, since light physical activity increases our [problem-solving skills](#).

Can't afford an executive-style standing desk? The web is full of innovative ideas for a temporary set-up, from modular furniture to shelving to books stacked on a counter. To start off the semester right, try experimenting with a standing desk. It might end up being your best year yet.

CLICK OF THE WRIST

Follow the Yellow Brick Road

This past week marked the 73rd anniversary of the Hollywood premiere of classic *The Wizard of Oz*. And while most of us have seen the movie several times, it's always worth revisiting! This week's links look behind the scenes of one of the most famous films in North American history.

71 Things You Didn't Know

In honour of the film's 71st anniversary two years ago, *The Guardian* published a list of 71 fascinating trivia points about the film, its creation, and its later success.

Tornado

Long before the advent of CGI, special-effects crews had to be pretty inventive in staging a realistic-looking storm. This article, from storm chaser website StormTracker, explains how the filmmakers created the illusion of a moving tornado.

Follow the Yellow Brick Road

You've heard of the yellow brick road, of course, but did you know that it may have had its origins in a small town where L. Frank Baum lived for a few years? Historians believe that Baum, who wrote the *Wizard of Oz* books, modelled the famous yellow bricks after a similar street in Peekskill, NY. This CBS video explains.

How It All Began

From where else did Baum derive his inspiration? This blog, maintained by *Finding Oz: How L. Frank Baum Discovered the Great American Story* author Evan I. Schwartz, sheds some light on the story behind the story.



IN CONVERSATION WITH . . .

Wanda Waterman



The Carolina Chocolate Drops, Part I

*"Cornbread and butterbeans and you across the table
Eating them beans and making love as long as I am
able*

*Growing corn and cotton too and when the day is
over*

*Ride the mule and cut the fool and love again all
over."*

Traditional

A Crush on History, a Love of Change

The Carolina Chocolate Drops is an American acoustic band playing in a traditional string band style. Their instruments include four-string banjo, five-string banjo, guitar, jug, harmonica, kazoo, snare drum, bones, quills, fiddle, beatbox, tambourine, mandolin, and cello. They use a mix of both traditional arrangements and their own creations, performing both their own and traditional Americana songs. Occasionally they also do recent pop songs in their own style. (Read the Voice review of the Carolina Chocolate Drops' new album, Leaving Eden.) Recently the band's co-founder, Dom Flemons, took the time to answer some of Wanda Waterman's questions about the band's unique way of embracing tradition.

Oldies, Field Recordings, and Dixieland

I've always had a love for history and for older music in general. My first interests in music were from the oldies station. A lot of rock 'n' roll, doo-wop, '60s rock, and pop. Later I grew an interest in folk music from the '60s, Bob Dylan, Dave Van Ronk, Lightnin' Hopkins, and people like that. I also enjoyed a lot of field recordings and New Orleans jazz as I got into college, and bebop when I was still doing slam poetry. After I did slam poetry for a bit I really got into the older songster repertoire and started going from there. That was around the time I first went to the Black Banjo Gathering in 2005.

Story Songs

I think the most mesmerizing experience I ever had was when I went to go see Dave Van Ronk in Phoenix, Arizona in 2001. He was such an engaging performer. He was sick at the time and would sadly pass away maybe four or five months later, but he left an impression on me. I was sitting in the back and had hooked up my four-track to the board. I recorded the show, which was an intimate audience of maybe 40 people. It changed my life and it made me want to do what he did. He not only played the songs he sang, but he

had a story for every song. Some were historical, some were anecdotal, and some were connected to his personal experience with the performer associated with the song (he told stories about John Hurt, Bob Dylan, Reverend Gary Davis, Tom Paxton, and Clarence Williams). It blew my mind, and I started forming my shows around that idea. I found that it was so important to talk to an audience about the music. You never know what people are going to take away from it. I've kept this way of playing a show with me since from the Black Banjo Gathering to now.

Influences

For the group, I know that Joe Thompson has been a huge influence. When Rhiannon, Justin, and I first started going down to see him there was a great sense of making good music and also that we were helping a long tradition of string bands live on. This was all just by going to Joe's house on Thursday nights. We never talked a lot about those things when we were there, we just played music. I know that I always felt blessed to be able to be a part of that.

On my own level, I would say that a fellow by the name of Gavan Weiser gave me my most beneficial experience. When I first started playing guitar I had a flat pick, and I kept dropping it in the sound hole. It was a terrible experience every time I tried to get it out of there. I was about 16 and I saw Gavan play guitar with his fingers. His main gig was playing bass in a punk band, so when he played acoustic guitar he just strummed it. I adapted what I saw him doing, not knowing that playing with my fingers would open up a whole new [form] of guitar playing.

I'm always looking for a new sound, and even when I just sit and listen to records with other people it creates a new experience with that music. Also, folks who are into roots music usually have their own set of research they've done on their own and they're usually more than willing to share, which is also a wonderful thing. That's probably the best training I've ever received: *Share the knowledge if you've got it.*

“‘Carolina Chocolate Drops’ is an homage to older black string bands and we have never tried to shy away from the uncomfortable racial, social, and political aspects of our material.”

Dom Flemons

Politically Incorrect?

Surprisingly, we haven't received a lot of flack face to face about our choice of titles and the like. Most times, once people see that we're serious about our music and that we're not trying to do a bunch of shuck and jive they get it. “Carolina Chocolate Drops” is an homage to older black string bands and we have never tried to shy away from the uncomfortable racial, social, and political aspects of our material.

That being said, our first notion has always been to present the music and material in a respectful and articulate way so that our audience can enjoy the music *without* needing to know the history, while making sure the historical materials are present for those who are interested.

(To be continued.)

MAGHREB VOICES

Wanda Waterman



Autumn in Tunisia

Part II: Hearing from Tunisians

"In all forms of Government the people is the true legislator."

Edmund Burke

Read Part I of this series [here](#).

The Arab Spring's weighty and far-reaching developments and repercussions have been both lauded and reviled, and even though the names and places keep changing the ball of revolt is still rolling. In the light of this, we need to keep an eye on what happens in Tunisia.

This tiny North African republic was, after all, the first Arab Spring country. Despite circumstances unique to Tunisia it might be helpful to study the aftermath of Tunisia's Jasmine Revolution in order to foresee possible obstacles awaiting Egypt, Syria, and other Arab countries that launched their revolutions later on. I asked a number of young Tunisians for their views on the relative success of the revolution and their personal forecasts for the future of the country. They've asked that their names be withheld.

Muslim scholar Tariq Ramadan [outlines](#) how the United States lured former President Ben Ali out of the country, later quickly moving in to try to manage the aftermath of the revolution in America's favour. US President Obama was being predictably true to the dictates of American foreign policy, and he wasn't alone. China also sought to profit from the shift in Tunisia's power dynamics.

Such is the informed view from outside Tunisia. But for the Tunisians themselves, who have long demonstrated a level of political savvy that's surprising given the years of silencing and media blackouts, other nations are also getting a little too close for comfort.

When Tunisians are asked which countries they feel are conspicuously involved in reconstruction, neither the US nor China stands out. I spoke with a student in Tunis who mentions the involvement of Turkey but even more of Qatar, which he calls "America's spoiled child" (suggesting the US's indirect interference).

Another student in Souss claims that a number of Gulf countries have also put their oars in. He feels that accepting the help of foreign powers will in the long run limit Tunisia's political and economic freedom. The problem, though, as a technician in Sfax points out, is that though it's clearly a form of bondage staring at them from the backs of the foreign bank, after years of high-level corruption Tunisia is hardly in an economic position to go it alone.

Another perceived threat to Tunisian freedom is the fact that a moderate Islamist party now holds power. The student in Tunis is critical of the Ennahda party, which won the election to the Constituent Assembly

with 90 of the 217 seats in October last year. He calls Ennahda incompetent and even suggests that having a religious party in power poses a risk.

“Politics and religion are alien to each other,” he says, echoing the Western liberal view. He adds that they “need to be kept separate.”

The vast majority of the population identifies itself as Muslim, Islam is the official state religion, and the president is required to be Muslim. But there’s a relative degree of respect for individual rights and freedoms among Tunisians, who are sometimes criticized by other Middle Eastern nations for being too worldly, too tolerant, and too lax in their application of Islam. The right to religious freedom is enshrined in the country’s constitution, and the tourist trade bends Islamic morality to accommodate pleasure-seeking European tourists.

“Dictators ride to and fro upon tigers which they dare not dismount. And the tigers are getting hungry.”

Winston Churchill

In Tunisia there’s a general belief that the outer trappings of Muslim faith (such as face covering for women and long beards for men) are foreign exports and not required by the essential dictates of the faith. Despite the adherence of local communities to a strict moral code, including high standards of modesty, several women have told me that the choice to wear the *hijab* is a personal one and that no woman should be condemned for not covering her head.

But an ultra-conservative minority doesn’t quite agree, and the government’s permissive attitude to the tantrums they’ve been throwing is the source of some anxiety.

The Sfax technician says that the Ennahda party is soft on the crimes of religious extremists because the extremists are among its supporters. When extremists react violently to perceived infractions (as they did recently to a university’s ban on face veils during exams and to an art exhibit they claimed was disrespectful to the Quran), the government simply looks the other way.

Secular social activists get quite a different reaction. The police response to alleged rabble-rousing is swift and punitive; for example, what happened to renowned activist Leena Ben Mhenni and her cohorts, who at a recent peaceful demonstration in Tunis were harassed and beaten by police.

The question of whether a just society is possible here hinges not on Tunisian tolerance and mutual respect but rather on whether or not Tunisians possess the fortitude to battle uphill against economic adversity, corruption, and religious extremism. On this question, the jury is still out.

(To be continued.)

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.



Progress

As I write this, August is half over—and I can't believe it. I know time appears to speed up as we age, but this is crazy.

I overheard Roy telling a friend on the telephone that he's "been very busy every day with very little to show for it." I can identify with that.

Yet while I can't account for every minute or even every day since July 1, there are some things to relish. We did manage to visit friends we haven't seen in months. We've seen a lot of family, too: parents, kids, siblings. We helped Greg and Carrie with their new house and gave my mom a hand preparing for her moving sales. We've spent some exhausting but fun times with Grady, including attending a small-town fair. By the way, the attractions are just as seedy and scary-looking as they were 20 years ago.

The mosquitoes are bearable and all the dragonflies are welcome, even when it seems like an aerial attack from Hitchcock's *The Birds*. The ant problem is becoming extreme, as our sandy soil makes for easy tunnelling. I admire their industriousness and can-do attitude; I just wish they'd do their work elsewhere. They are ruining our lawn and garden beds.

The weather has been, well different. It's been hot and humid with nearly daily rain showers. Several thunderstorms and storm watches and warnings have had us keeping our eyes on the sky. Touch wood, so far the hail hasn't hit any of our crops—and for that we are grateful. All this extra moisture has meant that the lawn is still green. Typically by mid-July it's getting brown and crunchy underfoot.

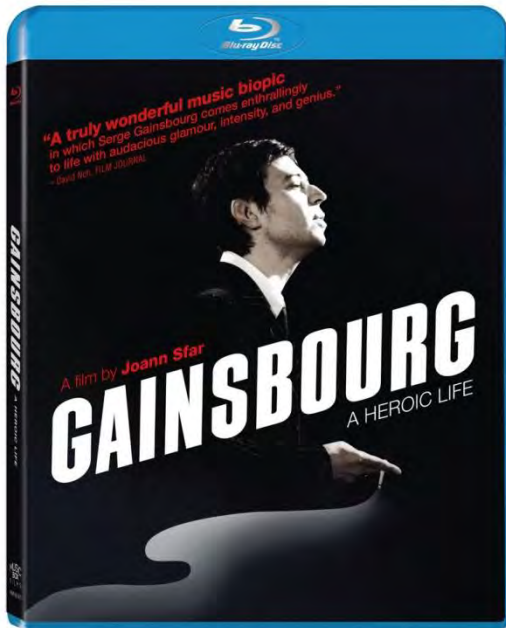
But most thrilling for me has been forward movement on the plan to renovate the kitchen. Like all reno projects it is growing in scope, but that's a good thing. I've logged millions of miles packing the contents of cupboards and bookcases and storing them downstairs. In predictable domino fashion that meant making order down there first. The ancient chest-style freezer will be gone, and in its place will be an energy-efficient upright. I can't wait to see which army of men will carry that old sucker up and out. We'll salvage as many of the cabinets as possible and use them in the basement for closed storage and optimum organization; at least that's my plan.

We've got the required help lined up: electrician (son Greg), installer (brother-in-law Jim), drywaller/stipple remover/painter (stranger Jim). Decisions about flooring, paint, countertops, and so on are in the works. I'm trying to stay a step ahead of everyone so there are no delays other than harvest and exhaustion. In the meantime I rejoice in the chaos because it means progress, from where I sit.

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

THE MINDFUL BARD

Wanda Waterman



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

Film: *Gainsbourg: A Heroic Life* (2010)

Writer/Director: Joann Sfar

Cast: Eric Elmosnino, Lucy Gordon, Laetitia Casta, and Anna Mouglalis

"In our family garden my husband is of the genus Narcissus, which includes daffodils and jonquils and a host of other ornamental flowers. There is, in such a genus of man, a pervasive and well-known pattern of grandiosity and egocentrism that feeds off this very kind of evening, this type of glitzy generosity. People of this ilk are very exciting to be around."

Joshua Braff

The young Lucien Gainsbourg is strolling nonchalantly through the streets of Nazi-occupied Paris after having been the first in line to pick up his yellow star at the local town hall. He spies an anti-Semitic propaganda poster picturing a Jew with a gigantic head and monstrous ears and nose. It looks like a caricature of his face. The head comes alive as a huge puppet and chases him until Lucien can tame him with a bit of tomfoolery.

He tries to kill the head, but it continues to follow him as he hides from the Nazis. Eventually the giant head is transformed into the svelte and elegant but also big-eared (and schnozzed) Professor Flipus, who contrasts with the giant head by demanding certain artistic directions for the ultra-creative Lucien.

The big head, reminding Lucien of his despised Jewish identity, still appears when his race endangers his safety, but when the danger is gone Professor Flipus returns to dictate a career change or an abdication of mundane human responsibilities. It's thus that Lucien constructs his ego defense: by means of a vicarious solidarity with groups (first Jews, then artists) to which he never quite feels he belongs, all to cover a deep-seated insecurity, a fear of being found unworthy.

Serge (born Lucien) Gainsbourg had a career that began in the early '40s but reached fruition in the '60s. He was a French pop culture icon who was a painter, poet, songwriter, and actor, and dabbled in wildly disparate musical genres.

In the film version of his life, his encounters with anti-Semitism in Paris while he was still going through puberty helped form the personal and sexual identity that would remain with him all his life. His insecurity drove him to excess and his excess was at once stimulating and destructive to his art.

The film loses points for having so little to say about the inner workings of the creative process, but deserves credit for what it tells about the artistic personality and its pitfalls. The subtitle “A Heroic Life” is clearly tongue-in-cheek; Gainsbourg comes out looking like a pathetic scallywag with no sense of accountability, no *raison d’être* but to continue debasing himself to satisfy his addictions.



Serial adulterers cheat on their partners because they have deep fears about their capacity to satisfy one partner.

Those who are themselves unsatisfied in their relationships also cheat, but without the first precondition it takes a lot longer to give oneself permission to stray. Gainsbourg displayed a sense of sexual entitlement that was in fact comprised of a profound sense of unworthiness.

One scene is set in Salvador Dali’s studio. There, a lovely young woman is trying to seduce Gainsbourg, who asks how the painter could so carefully paint such attractive girls in such seductive poses. His friend archly replies, “He screwed them first.” And so on.

What she doesn’t know is that Gainsbourg doesn’t need to make love to her in order to be able to paint or write about her beauty objectively. His narcissistic sangfroid allows him to examine every detail of her charm as if from a distance.

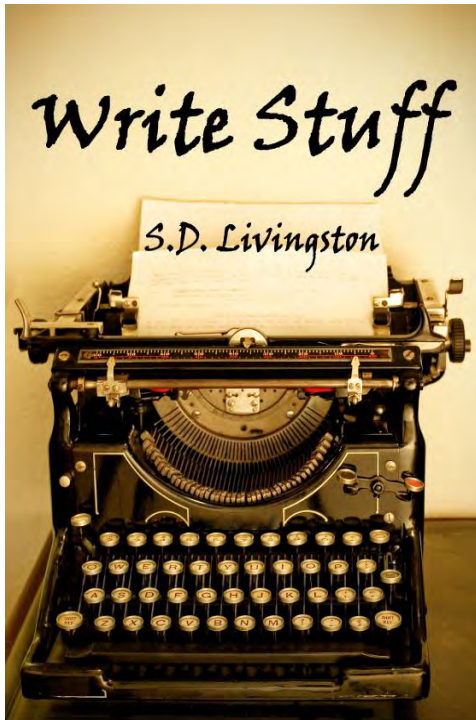
According to writer Thomas Moore, Narcissus is one who doesn’t know himself and who thus changes masks until he can discover his true face. He’s incapable of love and yet is so charismatic that he makes conquests with ease, leaving in his wake a trail of broken hearts. Unlike the pure psychopath, he has a conscience, and so suffers guilt and shame. When he does finally discover who he is, he can give himself permission to die.

I’m often disappointed in the seeming pointlessness of French films, and this one is no exception. However, it manages to be a sumptuous visual feast, full of succulent detail and evocative of a mad era that like it or not defined much of the postmodern aesthetic. The story presents us with a vivid object



lesson in the problem of the artistic ego and at the same time an allegory of what went wrong with European culture in the 20th century.

Gainsbourg: A Heroic Life manifests four of the Mindful Bard’s criteria about 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; and 4) it makes me appreciate that life is a complex and rare phenomenon, making living a unique opportunity.



A Mystery to Me

Most readers love a good mystery. And one of the biggest mysteries about books has always been editing—that vital yet shadowy bridge between author inspiration and finished book. It's taken the e-book and indie revolution to ignite a debate about this unseen realm, a realm where well-intentioned authors often stumble around in the dark.

It used to be that writers didn't have to worry about finding an editor. That expertise was supplied by the publishing house. And few readers, when they browsed the shelves at their favourite bookstores, thought to question whether any type of editing had been done.

All that's changed now, with the mainstream arrival of e-books and self-publishing. Suddenly, readers are questioning whether a book has been shaped by an editor's hand—a good question when you're

thinking of spending your time and money on an unknown quantity. But it's an even more important one if you're a writer trying to give readers a polished, professional book.

The bad news is that just about anyone can hang out a shingle and call himself an editor. In fact, using the word "editor" as a catch-all for the job's many facets is about as useful as looking under "mechanic" when you want someone who specializes in pre-war Bentleys.

So how is a writer supposed to find the right kind of editor for the job, or even to sort through the misconceptions about what an editor does?

The good news is that many reputable sources can fill in those blanks. The Editors' Association of Canada has a great [resource](#) that explains the different types of manuscript editing that exist. If you don't know the differences among substantive editing, copy editing, and proofreading, it's well worth checking out.

And a look at the Editorial Freelancers Association's [search page](#) shows that there's virtually no end to the areas editors specialize in. Click on the Specialty field and you'll find that the list goes well beyond fiction and non-fiction to include advertising, aerospace, comics, and even obituaries.

Worried about whether an editor knows her stuff? There are testimonials, of course, and editors often highlight a list of completed work on their websites. But education is often a customer's best protection, and that applies to hiring editors as well.

Substantive editing requires an eye for broad elements like sense and structure, and there are plenty of books on composition to help hone your skills (if you're a student, even rereading those tips on essay writing could come in handy).

If you're shopping around for a copy editor, brush up on your grammar and punctuation. Subscribe to blogs that highlight common writing and editing mistakes. The popular After Deadline [blog](#) at *The New York Times* gives bite-sized examples and explanations of errors that made it into print.

In short, have at least a rudimentary sense of what to look for (something that should be a basic skill for writers anyway). If your potential editor provides some sample pages and they are returned to you with glaring errors, it might be best to move on. Just remember that, when it comes to language, many of the so-called rules are fluid. What one person considers an error may simply be an established variation in spelling or style, so there might be a very good reason for a change you disagree with. Query the editor before you make a choice.

"Worried about whether an editor knows her stuff? . . . [Education] is often a customer's best protection, and that applies to hiring editors as well."

Whether you're a reader or writer, a fan of biographies or thrillers, there's an exciting variety of choices available today thanks to self-publishing. Together, as book lovers who want to keep the quality of those books high, we can't afford to let editing do a vanishing act.

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!).

DID YOU KNOW?



CanLearn's Financial Aid Resources

You're committed to the next step in your educational journey. Congratulations! Now comes the difficult question: *how are you going to pay for it?*

Navigating the maze of financial aid information out there can be overwhelming, but [CanLearn](#) will give you a good start in the right direction. CanLearn, an online resource from the Government of Canada, helps to streamline the process a little. Its goal is to "provide all the necessary resources (from interactive planning tools to information about savings programs, student loans, and scholarships)" for post-secondary educational financing, and it delivers. On CanLearn you can investigate various sources of financial aid, learn what you're qualified to apply for, and discover the appropriate provincial agencies for educational loans.

INTERNATIONAL NEWS DESK



At Home: A Good Read

It's hard to put down a good read. Well-written (or even just entertaining) stories can draw you into another world, making it difficult to close your book and pull yourself back into reality when the responsibilities of everyday life call.

Especially when you're at a really, really good part.

Recently, though, an Innerkip, Ontario woman discovered that sometimes it's better to set the book back on the shelf and pay attention to what you're supposed to be doing—in her case, driving.

As the *Woodstock Sentinel Review* [reports](#), Carmen Velocci, 63, “has been charged with careless driving under the Highway Traffic Act” after she was caught speeding down Highway 401 while buried deep in a book. A police officer “conducting a routine patrol” noticed Velocci travelling at 100 km/hour while “reading a book in plain sight.”

Whatever book she was reading must be worth adding to my library list.

Around the World: Lower My Bills

When the electrical bill comes 'round, it's usually time for groaning. Not so for one woman, though; she discovered that she'd overpaid for the past 25 years, and the electrical company owed *her* more than \$10,000.

As NBC Connecticut [reports](#), Grace Edwards, of Cheshire, CT, had been billed for decades for the cost of running the street lights near her home. The extra charges, which “amounted to about \$35 each month,” had been a carryover from the previous owner, a “developer who . . . had agreed to pay for the lights.”

It wasn't until Edwards put the house up for sale, 25 years later, that she discovered the overcharges after “a prospective buyer for the house asked for a history of utility charges.”

Although Connecticut Light and Power removed the charges once the error was discovered, it “initially refused to reimburse her.” Edwards had to contact the state's Office of Consumer Counsel, which “got the issue resolved in two business days,” Edwards said in a press release.

She was paid nearly \$10,500—covering the overcharges in addition to the interest accumulated over 25 years.

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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CLASSIFIEDS

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