

# THE VOICE

## MAGAZINE

Vol 20 Iss 35 2012-09-14

### One More Chance

A day in the life

### Relief Rx

Combat aches naturally

### Love and Loss

*Monsieur Lazhar*

*Plus:  
From Where I Sit  
In Conversation  
and much more!*



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# LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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indicate if we may publish your letter.



## EDITORIAL

Christina M. Frey



## Living Out My Chance at Life

This past week, borders were blurred as North Americans set aside their differences for the day and remembered September 11 and those who lost their lives in the tragedy. I can't watch the footage anymore. Now that I have a child, it somehow hits a part of me that didn't exist when I was young and single and full of shock and horror. When I lacked that intense tie to another. When I understood, but didn't really understand.

So I avoid the television, but I remember in my own way. I read tributes and I pause and think and I try to appreciate my family and friends a little more deeply. It's so easy to forget what can be wiped out in a minute.

And I don't just mean loved ones.

This year, a new perspective moved me. One line, written by a woman who was supposed to be in the World Trade Center that day but wasn't. She mourned and reflected and asked, "And I wonder: am I living a life that deserves that chance I got 10 years ago?"

And that's when I realized. *Every single day, I'm given that same chance. And I don't quite know what my answer would be.*

We don't like to think about death. We hear the news during our commute or we check out the headlines online, but there's a disconnect. It's stories, like something created in Hollywood. Sad, tragic, but so far removed that we don't really think it can happen to us.

It can. It does.

But here's the thing: *it didn't today.*

And so I ask myself: Am I living a life that gives credit to the gift I receive each day? Do I show gratitude not by saying "I'm thankful" but by living thankfully? By using the gift of life in a beautiful manner rather than tossing it in the corner, dragging it through the muck, leaving it out in the rain to rot?

We're told to live each day as though it were our last. But we should be living each day as though it were our first. Full of wonder and gratitude. Full of enthusiasm and potential. Full of hope.

So how am I living? I don't know how to answer that question. I don't know whether I ever will. But what I do know is that I'll never stop asking it. And maybe it's in the act of looking for that answer that I'll someday find it.



## IN CONVERSATION

Wanda Waterman



Giacomo Gates at Dizzy's. Photo: Frank Stewart.

## Giacomo Gates, Part I

*"Gates is more than a jazz singer. He's a musician, a hornman who 'plays' through a wonderfully weathered baritone voice. He's also a storyteller, a traveler who's seen and lived a lot of life. It's a combination that gives his performance an unusually deep emotional and musical resonance. Giacomo Gates just may be the Dennis Hopper of vocal Jazz."*

Chuck Berg, Topeka Journal

**Giacomo Gates is a baritone jazz singer known for his engaging vocalese, a form made famous by Lambert, Hendricks, and Ross, among others. Vocalese is composed by fitting new lyrics to jazz tunes and even to fast, complex instrumental solos. (Read the Voice review of his latest album, *The Revolution Will Be Jazz*.) Recently Wanda Waterman went to hear Gates sing at Blackstone's in Laconia, New Hampshire, as part of the New Hampshire Jazz performances.**

## Singing "Pretty Baby"

Giacomo Gates had his first singing engagement at the age of six. He'd been enrolled in a tap dancing class. "When the recital was about to take place," he recalls, "I didn't want to dance. I was told, 'If you don't dance, you'll have to sing.' Solid. I sang 'Pretty Baby' in front of eight boys and girls tapping. That was my first gig!"

## Blackstone's

Many gigs later, we're at the posh Margate Resort in Laconia, on New Hampshire's Lake Winnepesaukee, the summer home of city folk who descend like clouds of locusts to take in beaches, forests, miles of small amusement parks, and every water sport imaginable.

We enter the beautifully designed main building and after some labyrinthine wandering arrive at Blackstone's, a deliciously intimate yet airy enclave. There we meet Jonathan Lorentz, his pork pie hat sheltering an incongruously fresh face (why does one expect a weathered face under such a hat?). Lorentz is the founder of New Hampshire Jazz, a wonderful new initiative to bring the best live acts to local and visiting jazz fans. Music promoter is his second vocation; he is himself a lauded master of the sax.

*"The experience of seeing and hearing [Gates] live after having listened to his recordings for a week is like walking from a closet into an arena. The man is a natural performer and his voice is better suited to spaces than to audio recordings."*

Bassist Bruce Gertz and pianist John Funkhouser mount the stage, take their places, and nonchalantly begin to open up an immense musical vista that sweeps away the mundane and adds a dimension of timeless elegance. In the audience we are instantly connected to the rich, manifold history of jazz while at the same time the musicians are pointing a way forward into the new unknown.

Lorentz arrives to introduce the musicians. He then presents Giacomo Gates.

Giacomo mounts the stage, folds his lanky frame onto a wooden bar stool, politely gives Bruce and John a song and a key, and launches into a standard. The experience of seeing and hearing him live after having listened to his recordings for a week is like walking from a closet into an arena. The man is a natural performer and his voice is better suited to spaces than to audio recordings.

And in the one area that makes jazz performance so delightful to watch—that of group rapport—this little group is a joy to observe. Giacomo signals solos and whispers song titles and keys as Funkhouser grins his approval of a particularly sweet bit of singing. We hear the mounting mutual approval in the piano keys and bass strings, and even in Giacomo's singing as he's egged on by ever more witty and energized playing.

During the intermission I ask Gertz and Funkhouser how long they've been playing with Giacomo. John looks at his watch and smiles: "Just over an hour."

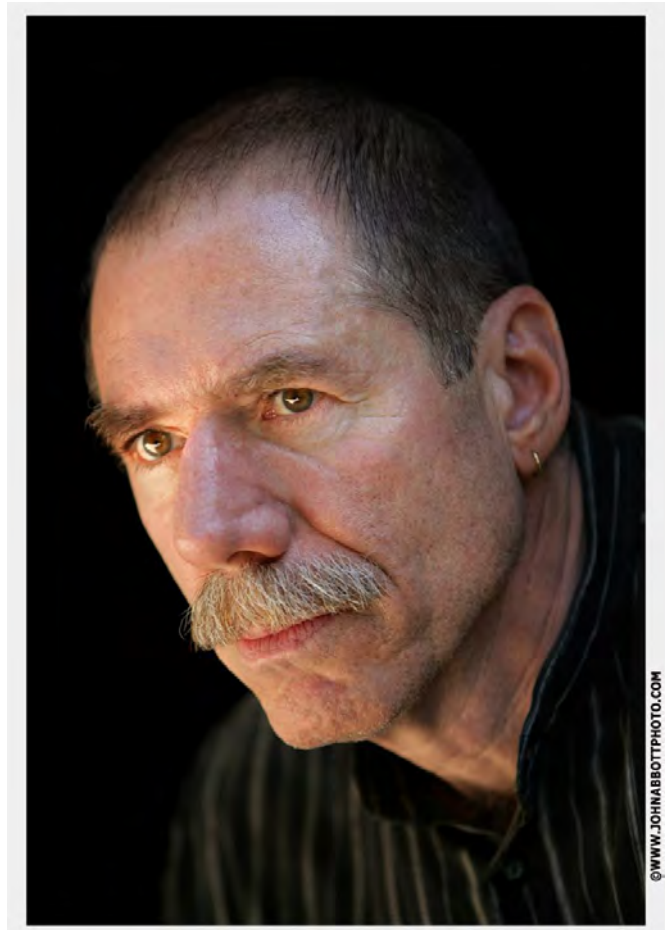
Gasp.

### **Weddings, Highways, Dams, and Casinos**

Gates was born and raised in Bridgeport, Connecticut. His father was a skilled welder who worked on aircraft and racing cars and later in life did torch metal sculpting. His mother was a seamstress and homemaker.

Growing up, Giacomo listened to his dad's classical and big band records. In addition to exposing him to good music, his father set an example of musical discipline by being an accomplished amateur violinist. Giacomo began taking guitar lessons at the age of eight.

"By the age of 16," he says, "I was playing with musicians who were in their late teens or early 20s, and we played for weddings. Back then wedding music came from *The Great American Songbook*: Cole Porter, Gershwin, Rodgers & Hart, Arlen, Berlin, etc. I was exposed to some of the best music of the mid-20<sup>th</sup>



**Giacomo Gates. Photo: John Abbott.**

century. By the time I reached my late teens, my interest in playing the guitar lessened, but I continued to sing for the fun of it.”

Giacomo attended an engineering college but dropped out after a year. He preferred, he says, actually constructing roads to drawing up the plans for their construction.

“At the age of 25, I split for Fairbanks, Alaska, because I’d heard about the Trans-Alaskan Pipeline and had always been interested in Alaska and Australia. It took me a year to get the kind of work I was interested in, and in the meantime I worked odd jobs: bartender, sheet rocker, landscaper, tour bus driver, railroad labourer, carpenter’s helper, and relief dealer and bouncer in a gambling casino, where I also occasionally escorted some of the working girls back and forth to work.

“I worked and lived in Alaska for several years, then spent a year in Washington State, a season in Arizona, and a short time in Louisiana, working road construction, dam jobs, and offshore drill rigs.”

*(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.*

## DID YOU KNOW?



### Student ID Cards

Studying by distance? You can still get student discounts at the movies, bookstore, or train station! According to the [AU Student Calendar](#), every “active Athabasca University student” is eligible to request a photo student identification card.

To apply, you need to complete the [required form](#) and submit a photo. Acceptable photos are “taken by an Athabasca University staff member whenever possible.” However, if circumstances require it the Registrar’s Office will accept a digital photo together with a copy of your driver’s license, or a passport photo. If not taken by AU staff, photos must be signed by a guarantor, someone “who can attest to your identity.” Further instructions can be found [here](#).

Still have last year’s ID card? Don’t throw it away, as AU students are only eligible for one card during the course of their studies. To keep the card current from year to year, active students may “request a date sticker from the Office of the Registrar, AU Edmonton, or AU Calgary.”

## HEALTH MATTERS: OUCH!

Katie D'Souza



Arthritis, frozen shoulder, stiff neck, sore back: besides pain, what do these all have in common? *Inflammation*.

Inflammation is our body's "red flag," directing attention to something that's not right. Inflammatory conditions can be painful or limiting—or both—and it often feels as though the only options are painkillers or invasive medical techniques.

However, that's not the case; natural medicine offers many venues for inflammation relief. And while it may not be possible to entirely eliminate all symptoms, there's a good chance that using one or a combination of the following methods may help reduce pain, improve mobility, and give a better range of motion.

### **Diet**

What we eat affects our bodies, so it's a given that diet can impact our inflammation levels. Diets that promote inflammatory markers are those high in fatty foods and low in fruits and vegetables. On the other hand, diets that include five to ten servings of fruits and vegetables daily, complemented by whole grains and adequate protein, work to reduce inflammation (and therefore pain and stiffness).

Note that not all vegetables will be helpful, however. For some people, foods from the *Solanaceae* plant family—tomatoes, potatoes, eggplant, and peppers, for example—can also aggravate an inflammatory condition. There is no blood test to tell you this; you'd have to eliminate these foods for three weeks (either all at once or one at a time) and then add them back into your diet and note any worsening of your symptoms. It's worth a try if your diet seems healthy but you're still suffering from inflammation-related problems.

### **Fish Oil**

We've all heard of the health benefits of fish oil, but here's one that bears repeating: fish oil is anti-inflammatory. The active ingredients in fish oil, EPA and DHA, work to reduce inflammation. However, the key is in the dose; in order for fish oil to be effective you have to take enough of the active ingredients. Aiming for a minimum of 2,000 mg EPA daily will get your pain and swelling reduction off to a good start.

Additionally, be sure to read the label on your fish oil supplements; check for oil that's pharmaceutical-grade and that has been tested for impurities, heavy metals, and other toxins. As well, take note of the type of fish used. Fish with the highest concentrations of EPA are the small, fatty ones (think anchovies and sardines).



One caution: those taking blood thinners (Warfarin or Coumadin, for example) should be wary when using fish oil, since the oil can have a minor blood thinning effect. As always, speak with your natural health care practitioner.

### Acupuncture

Acupuncture is one of the oldest forms of medicine and has been practiced with success in China for hundreds of years. The good news for backache sufferers is that acupuncture has been shown to reduce pain, swelling, and other symptoms of inflammation by improving blood flow to the area (better blood flow means better oxygen and nutrient flow, and therefore a faster rate of healing). Additionally, acupuncture can be used to treat muscle knots and tension, especially in the neck, back, and hips. Don't be afraid of the needles, either. Acupuncture is relaxing, rarely painful, and promotes a limber after-treatment feeling!

### Stretching and Exercise

Depending on your condition, exercise and gentle stretching might also help improve your range of motion and reduce your stiffness. Got heel pain? Roll the sole of your foot back and forth over a pop can. This allows the arches of your feet to stretch in a gentle manner. What about neck stiffness from desk work? Gently moving your neck around its full range of motion—up, down, side-to-side, and around—can limber up muscle-bound areas.

Remember that the key is to not overdo it; exercise should be gentle, not forceful. And you should always check with your healthcare provider before starting any exercises, especially if you have inflammation or stiffness as the result of an injury like a muscle tear.

Pain and stiffness can be so limiting, but you may be able to find some relief. Check out what natural medicine can offer you!

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

*Disclaimer: The information contained in this article is for personal interest only; it is not intended for diagnosis or treatment of any condition. Readers are always encouraged to seek the professional advice of a licensed physician or qualified health care practitioner for personal health or medical conditions.*

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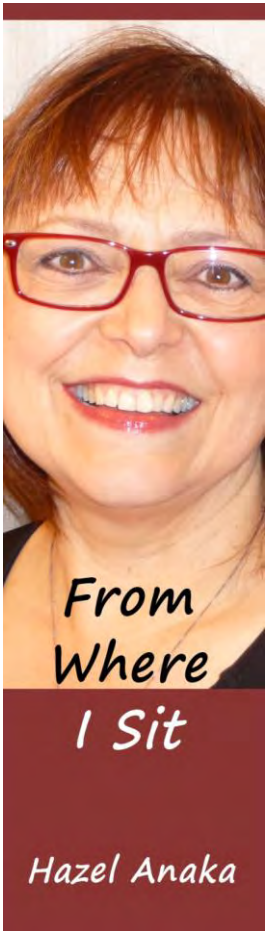
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## Hard Work, Tangible Results

Believe it or not, plans for our kitchen reno are moving along. That is, they were until Roy suddenly took an interest in the project.

I thought we had a kitchen layout and cabinet style agreed upon a month or two ago. I ordered a sample door and end panel so we could see the real thing in its potential environment. I moved it from place to place, eyeing the colour in relation to the floor samples I had. I used it with my Benjamin Moore fan deck of paint chips to narrow down wall colour choices.

Then last week, Roy announced that he didn't like the look of the door. Little did he know we were paying extra for the antique glaze and distressed look. Then we saw a Martha Stewart display kitchen we both loved. Problem is, the price per linear foot was \$65 higher than the original one. Unfortunately I had to be the one to tell our kitchen designer brother-in-law to go back to the drawing board to get a new quote. The jury is still out.

*Don't shoot the messenger*, I said. In the skewed world of male-female inequity, if I were the one changing my mind so late in the game the howling would still be echoing. Because it was him, it appears to be okay.

But I persevere. I keep emptying cupboards and cajoling Roy into helping with the heavier work. Our electrician son has already upgraded the breaker box and said to just decide whatever we want and he'll make it happen. I see pot lights, pendants, under-cabinet lighting, an electrified island, and enough outlets in my future. Good son.

We've engaged a guy to remove and replace the stipple ceilings throughout the house; Jim to do the miscellaneous carpentry and cabinet installation; and a gal to do the flooring. We'll also spring for the first professional paint job of our lives. I've selected laminate for the entire main floor, but maybe Roy will surprise me there, too.

As I fill box after box of kitchen stuff, I realize that we have too much. Too much booze for a couple who rarely drinks; too many dishes and gadgets; too many canned and dry goods. Must be a result of living so far away from food stores.

We've decided to replace our old monstrosity of a chest freezer with a new, energy-efficient upright. The days of needing space for the beef and flock of broiler hens you butchered are long gone; families no longer freeze enough garden bounty for their seven children. The old cupboards will find new life in the basement and solve some storage problems down there. Goodwill benefitted from many donations.

I've refinished the top of our antique dark oak table and will reupholster the seats on six chairs. Hard work, tangible results; gotta love it, 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:** *Monsieur Lazhar* (Music Box Films 2012)

**Writer/Director:** Philippe Falardeau (based on the stage play *Bashir Lazhar*, a one-character play by Évelyne de la Chenelière)

**Cast:** Mohamed Fellag, Sophie Nélisse, Émilien Néron, Danielle Proulx, Brigitte Poupart

**Genre:** Art House/International

*"Death ends a life, not a relationship."*

Jack Lemmon

### The Bottomless Tenderness of the Broken Heart

Algerian immigrant Bashir Lazhar holds a picture of his two children, a boy and a girl. Slowly the picture fades into his mental image of the faces of the children he teaches in Montreal, children now the subject of much concern by parents and teachers in the aftermath of a traumatic event. The children (sixth graders, it seems) have suddenly lost their homeroom teacher, and in a shocking manner.

This is the story of two akin crises that meet and greet each other from across a chasm. One is the baffled shame experienced by children faced with an act they can't help taking personally, while the other is a victim's anguish over a crime that was very personal indeed. Both parties have lost people they loved. Both are victims of acts of rage: one buried and one overt.

I'm still at a loss to explain why this film moved me to tears even from the first scenes. Normally I'm able to put my finger on the specific technique—certain elements in the scenery or a particular facial expression or tone of voice—but I find the methods in this film hard to trace. The key may be that the heart is initially prepared with scenes so mundane, so much the essence of things we've all experienced (a boy whipping the hat from his buddy's head every time he passes behind him, for example), that when the shocking event is presented, even though it's subtly framed it provokes a rush of empathy.





Or perhaps it has something to do with the spaciousness, the way in which each cinematic message is framed in space, time, and simple elegance. Incidentally, this is an excellent way of helping the viewer to absorb and internalize important details.

Reading about the film beforehand won't prepare you for the great tenderness and warmth of Mohamed Fellag's portrayal of the protagonist Lazhar. He's the kind of person people warm to quickly, and the Quebecois in this film welcome him immediately into their hearts.

*Monsieur Lazhar* rouses the sentiments without being sentimental. The protagonist has not been embittered by his personal ordeal but rather has been transformed by his refusal to wallow in bitterness or cower in fear. In his mind there is no question of excusing his rage or living in trauma. Lazhar remains irrevocably human, not relinquishing an atom of soul in the wake of his tremendous loss.

Sometimes those who lose children of their own experience an unusual form of spiritual metamorphosis: their love for their own children flies from their hearts, becomes oceanic, and embraces every child it meets.



*Monsieur Lazhar* manifests five of the Mindful Bard's criteria for films well worth seeing: 1) it is authentic, original, and delightful; 2) it inspires an awareness of the sanctity of creation; 3) it displays an engagement with and compassionate response to suffering; 4) it gives me tools of compassion, enabling me to respond with compassion and efficacy to the suffering around me; and 5) it makes me appreciate that life is a complex and rare phenomenon, making living a unique opportunity.

*"Thinking and talking about death need not be morbid; they may be quite the opposite. Ignorance and fear of death overshadow life, while knowing and accepting death erases this shadow."*

*Lily Pincus*

## GREEN LIGHT

It's sad, but true: the natural beauty of waterways is often marred by litter tossed by careless beachgoers. And not only is it unattractive, but it's also dangerous to the wildlife who inhabit the coastal and lakeside areas.

The good news is that it's easy to make a difference. Between September 15 and 23 you can participate in the Great Canadian Shoreline Cleanup, a cross-country series of events that allow Canadians to "work together to help clean up a specific area at one of their local waterways." Check the website to find a cleanup site near you—or coordinate your own. Let's take some responsibility for our natural heritage!

## INTERNATIONAL NEWS DESK



### At Home: Emergency Vehicle

Big vehicles guzzle gas. They're hard to park. They can be a menace on narrow streets. But it's not all bad: their bulky frame can save lives, and not just the lives of their drivers.

As the *Huffington Post* [reports](#), a Canadian Hummer driver "used his car to shield four young children in danger of being run over."

Darrell Krushelnicki was leaving a shopping centre in Edmonton when he saw "a group of children [step] out into the crosswalk." At the same time, a silver Pontiac was speeding toward the intersection. He appeared to be "talking on his cellphone,"

witnesses claim, and "investigators say was traveling at close to 80 kilometers [per hour] . . . in a 30 kilometer . . . zone."

Krushelnicki instinctively reacted: He "quickly drove his . . . Hummer into the path of the oncoming vehicle," pushing it aside "before it could reach the crosswalk." Neither driver received serious injury, although both vehicles sustained damage.

Krushelnicki has been lauded as a hero, but he told reporters, "I believe anyone would have done that," adding, "There was really no one else, I just had to do . . . what I did."

The driver of the Pontiac "has . . . been charged with dangerous driving."

### Around the World: Frozen

A 59-year old woman is in critical condition after she spent several days stuck inside a freezer in her home.

As ABC News [reports](#), Theresa Christian is believed to have "climbed inside . . . over the weekend to seek shelter from bad storms and tornadoes." According to police, "evidence inside suggests that she did try and [struggle] to get the door open."

It took as many as five days before she was be rescued.

After several days of silence, her son came looking for his mother and "heard moaning coming from near the freezer chest." At the time of rescue, Christian had suffered "severe frostbite" and was unable to speak clearly to officers.

## 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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## THE VOICE

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