

THE VOICE

MAGAZINE

Vol 21 Issue 11 2013-03-29

Signs of the Times

Apostrophe catastrophe

False Prophets

Searching for answers

Three Hours

How to save a life

*Plus:
From Where I Sit
Gregor's Bed
and much more!*



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***The Voice
Magazine***

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The Voice is published
every Friday in HTML and
PDF format.

For weekly email
reminders as each issue is
posted, fill out the
subscription form [here](#).

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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.



THREE HOURS

Maxie van Roye



Three hours. That's the length of a feature film, with previews and enough time to load up on pre-movie snacks. That's one evening, downtime I would have spent on dinner: cooking, eating, cleaning up afterward. That's a few sitcoms and a bit of Facebooking.

That's enough time to learn how to save a life someday.

Recently, the local library offered a community CPR class on a weekday evening. In just three hours, I learned enough to surprise and shock me. In the area where I live, the average paramedic response time is six to eight minutes. (In remote areas, or during bad weather conditions, that time increases.) Sounds good, right? But when someone goes into cardiac arrest, his chances of survival decrease by seven to ten per cent for *every minute he's not being treated*.

Do the math. That's why community knowledge of CPR skills is so important.

For most of us, our medical know-how comes from TV. Mouth-to-mouth; a few chest compressions; giant AED paddles and someone shouting, "Clear!" It all seems complicated, scary, well beyond the scope and skill of a layperson.

But it's not. Any adult can learn CPR. Any adult can learn how to save a life.

CPR recommendations have changed, the paramedics told us. You're not expected to give mouth-to-mouth anymore; in fact, you're usually discouraged from doing so. Chest compressions are the preferred method of providing CPR, and although there's a specific way to perform them, it's easy to learn. You don't need big muscles; your body weight helps you out (if you're small like me, you will have to work harder—it is definitely a workout—but it is doable).

As for AED use, it's quite simple; and modern units are small, easy to use, and come with both pictorial directions and voice guidance. Most will tell you whether a shock is advised in your patient's situation.

How many more patients would survive cardiac arrest if we all knew basic life-saving skills? Check with your local hospital or fire department, community college, and library, or even your provincial heart health association; many organizations offer short, free classes to community members. The one I attended was sponsored by the local volunteer fire department.

It's not a formal certification. I can't work as a paramedic or put any kind of credentials on my resume. But I do know enough to work an AED if someone has a heart attack in the middle of the mall, and I can perform basic CPR "just in case" there's an emergency somewhere and the responders haven't arrived yet. I know what to do if someone keels over at a party. I can help a family member, friend, or stranger.

I can give someone a chance at life. That's an amazing feeling.

It's worth three hours to know that.



Recent Discoveries from the Realm of the Experimental and the Avant Garde

Album: Wayne Shorter, *Without a Net*

Artists: Wayne Shorter on tenor and soprano sax, with pianist Danilo Perez, bassist John Patitucci, and drummer Brian Blade

Here's to Weaving Your Own Net

Robert Frost wrote, "Writing free verse is like playing tennis with the net down."

I adore Robert Frost and really don't think he was ruling out the possibility of eschewing convention and allowing the work of art in question to devise its own rules. In fact he did that himself, classicist though he was, choosing, for example, the use of homely rustic language to express his unusual perspectives in iambic pentameter. And consider how "The Road Not Taken" implies, among other things, the artist's naturally pioneering spirit.

In the avant garde, of course, we see a tendency to almost always let the *oeuvre* make its own rules; this practice is responsible, at least in the best avant garde art, for ushering in the future.

Wayne Shorter has been producing albums for decades, but some people were just born avant garde and with postmodern spoons in their mouths. Everything they do is new and groundbreaking because they look deeper into themselves than most—and are a wee bit braver.

Shorter was born at a time that almost dictated innovation or musical death. This master of jazz innovation, who was called "Mr. Weird" in high school, first entered the jazz world as a musician in the late '50s, when the world was at the tail end of its peak of achievement and sophistication and just heading down the slope. His career therefore spanned the years of inevitable decadence.

I don't mean decadence in an unflattering way; I'm referring to one of those periods in which genres fall from cultural dominance as jazz did, eras during which every element in a genre gets questioned and deconstructed. During times like these we find unusual and fertile partnerships, and some of the very best and most groundbreaking works of art emerge. In Shorter's case, his peers included none other than John Coltrane and Miles Davis, the giants of free jazz.

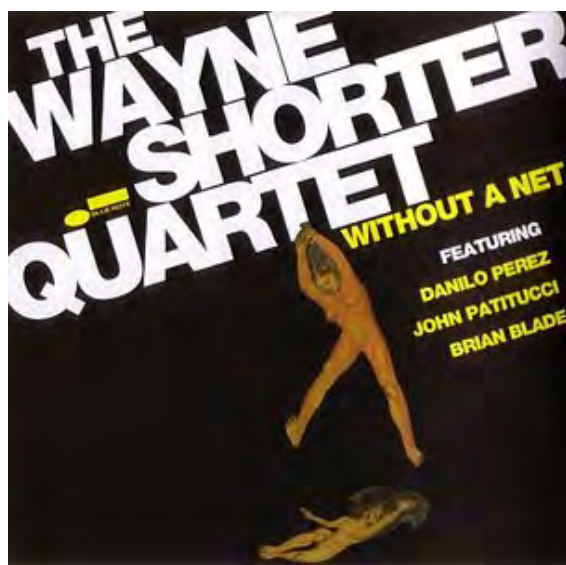
Shorter later went on to cofound Weather Report, the pioneering fusion band, but in 1997 he put an end to the high-tech exploration he'd undertaken with Weather Report and went acoustic. In 2001 he put together an acoustic quintet that included all the members of the present band, all of whose work fits the Shorter aesthetic, producing recklessly wondrous music, rich with a thoughtful intensity. After a 43-year hiatus from Blue Note, Shorter returned to the praiseworthy label to make this album.

Without a Net is marked by successions of notes so rapid that they sound like one long note, tone clusters that could be better described as single sounds undulating in pitch, like a cat's meow or the whistling of the wind at the screen door.

During "Plaza Real," Shorter produces an insistently sexy tenor solo. The track returns us to an elegant traditional construction that slowly tests the waters and becomes more experimental, venturing into free jazz waters; it is very Coltrane-esque, grounding everything in easily hummable modes and phrases and then stretching the timid ear to incorporate progressively less contrived sounds.

The 23-minute "Pegasus" is a stunning example of how modern jazz composers create work in the same area as serious contemporary composers for film. The modal phrase is explored in repetition but with a great deal more innovation in each repetition than one finds in traditionally modal music. Shorter has received a lot of guff for venturing into this stubbornly non-swinging territory—very unfair criticism considering the calibre of music he's thereby created.

"(The Notes) Unidentified Flying Objects" is a free jazz flying circus of dissonant atonal virtuosity.



On "Zero Gravity to the 10th Power," bassist John Patitucci delivers a juicy bass solo to the minimal accompaniment of Perez's "Night in Tunisia"-evocative piano.

In keeping with postmodern jazz, *Without a Net* embraces what Wynton Marsalis calls "all of jazz" while managing to be deeply personal and original. There are times when Shorter gives the sax a strange new voice, chattily human. If you had to compare it, you might say the sound is something like Liza Minnelli's character in *Sterile Cuckoo*—marginalized, manic, sensitive, unpredictable, uninhibited, intensely original, and profoundly loving.

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.

Mark Your Calendars: AUSU Annual General Meeting

AUSU will hold its Annual General Meeting on Wednesday, April 10, at 5:30 pm MST. The meeting is free and will be held via teleconference; all currently active undergraduate students may attend.

If you're interested in issues affecting AU students, you won't want to miss the teleconference. The meeting will review AUSU's financial statements for 2012 and the budget for 2013, and will "also discuss new service offerings and have a session for members to ask questions." For more information or for copies of relevant documents, visit the AUSU [website](#) or email ausu@ausu.org.

OVERHEARD . . .

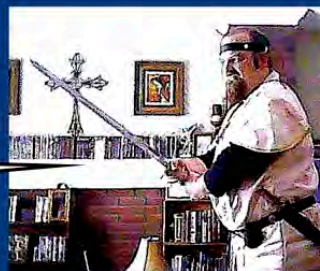
Wanda Waterman

OVERHEARD



The wimps in my live action role-playing group are trying to ban ultra-light latex-foam weapons.

True, ultra-lights make machine-gunning* a lot easier . . .



. . . but according to somebody's notes, machine-gunning only accounted for something like 10 per cent of all damages in some year or another.

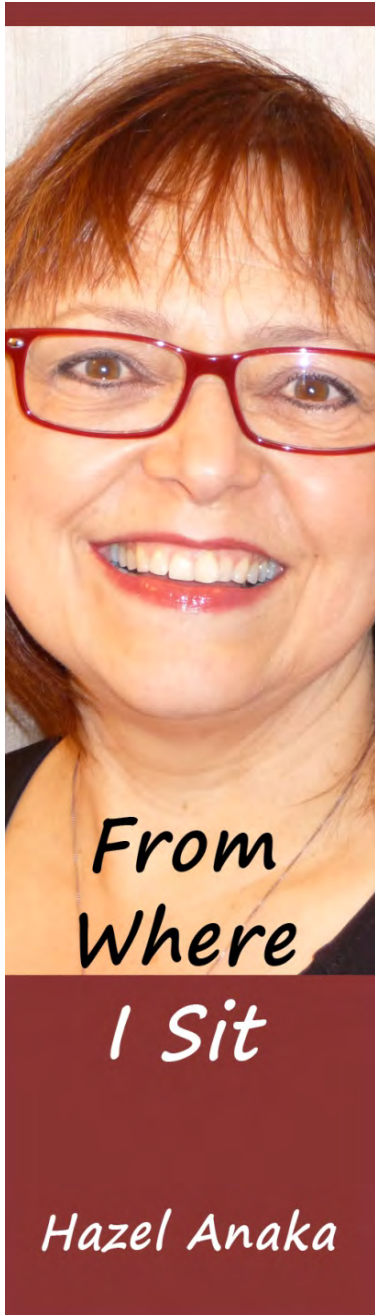
And what's wrong with these whey-faced poltroons? Can't they take a few bruises and blisters in the name of role-playing Freedom?



Besides, without ultra-light latex-foam weapons how will we defend ourselves during the zombie apocalypse?

*Machine-gunning is repeatedly striking another player in the same spot on his or her body, sometimes resulting in mild injuries.

WRITTEN BY
WANDA
WATERMAN



Not a Bad Legacy

If we are really, really lucky we get to grow old. We bitch and moan about the nuisance and inconvenience of aging, but when you consider the alternative, for most it's a no-brainer.

We have a front-row seat to the end stages of the process with Roy's 95-year-old aunt. She is confused about her whereabouts and thinks the closets and cupboards she sees hold the objects from her apartment. We see her refuse to eat the "garbage" they're feeding her at the hospital.

But she is a feisty old gal, and I am taking notes for both how to and how not to age gracefully. As someone who loves to call a spade a spade, I admire her outspokenness. Most old people don't suffer fools gladly and feel they've earned the right to stop pussyfooting around the truth as they see it.

When a palliative care physician came to assess her suitability for either long-term care or hospice, we sat through the now-familiar questionnaire. When asked to write a sentence, Roy's aunt wrote "Time to leave." When the doctor and Roy stepped into the hall to talk, she whispered, "Jackass." She said, "He calls himself a doctor? Roy could do the same."

Her referring to him as Dr. Killem Quick reassures us that her sense of humour is intact despite the indignity of becoming dependent. It's a damn fine defense, and one I intend to copy.

We were stunned when a bed in long-term care opened up about a week after we picked three options. Because she was declared incapable of making her own decisions, Roy's role as enduring power of attorney kicked in. And our work began.

Giving notice at her apartment, disposing of its contents, cancelling utilities, and assuming her banking were at the top of the list. We moved a nightstand and some photos of her beloved dog, Barney, to decorate her space in her semi-private room. What was harder was digging through her dresser drawers and closet trying to figure out what to take to the new place. We wrote her name on neck tags, because items go missing with communal laundry service for a hundred people.

We wonder if the things I selected were her favourites or items that simply hadn't been purged for whatever reason. It felt invasive to be handling undergarments, to see that we all hang onto items long past their serviceable lives. Some of the items we're donating look like they belong on the set of *Mad Men*.

When we die or make our final move to a place like long-term care, we lose control over our stuff. The cliché about not being able to take it with you is true. Picking through the stuff of her life was both easier and harder than I imagined. Harder because it was sad grunt work; easier because much of it was going to an agency that transitions the homeless into homes. That's not a bad legacy, from where I sit.

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

CLICK OF THE WRIST

Eggstravaganza

This weekend, artistry will abound as countless adults and children decorate eggs in recognition of the Easter holiday. But decorative eggs are about more than a supermarket kit with shockingly bright colouring tablets. This week's links take a look at some of the more egg-celent artwork out there, both created by nature and by people.

Work of Art

It's hard to match the beautifully decorated East European Easter eggs, but although the procedure is complicated, it's not completely inaccessible to the uninitiated. This excellent video tutorial explains how to make Ukrainian *pysanky* and describes the history and symbolism of the craft.

Eco Eggs

If you want to go the traditional dyeing route, but aren't a fan of using artificial colouring, try a more natural solution. *Kiwi* magazine describes how to use berries, vegetables, and spices to make food-based dyes.

By Birdie

You can also let nature take care of the colouring job and enjoy the many variations in egg color and appearance that occur among different species of birds. This 2010 article, from LiveScience, explains the origins of some of the patterns—and suggests that there's much more that doesn't meet the (human) eye.

Ancient Beauty

Exotic eggs aren't just pretty to look at, they give us important clues to the past (and, by extension, the present and future). This 1996 interactive feature by *National Geographic* allows users to explore the finding, collection, and interpretation of fossilized dinosaur eggs.





Please Don't Eat the Apostrophes

What's that you say? Nobody cares about grammar and punctuation anymore? Maybe not on your street, but if you happen to wander down a leafy lane in certain UK towns, you'd better keep your wits about you. Another district council has officially banned the apostrophe on their street signs, and the move has plenty of people seeing red.

The Mid-Devon District Council announced the ban recently, and the main reason seems to be that apostrophes might cause confusion. That was the same logic given when another council, Preston City Council, banned apostrophes on their own street signs back in 2009. Keeping the little black possessive mark in St. Paul's Square would, apparently, have caused "confusion among residents, and also increase[d] the risk of inconsistency and error," as *The Telegraph* reported.

I suspect, though, that it's not the confusion that's the problem. Rather, it's all the time and money the confusion is costing. When a concerned resident calls in

to complain that an apostrophe is missing (or should be hauled away to the apostrophe junk heap), councils have to make a decision. That takes time and taxpayers' money. How much time? Enough that one councillor in Birmingham reported they were "constantly getting residents asking for apostrophes to be put back in."

But the Mid-Devon apostrophes weren't about to be wiped into oblivion without a fight. The Plain English Campaign leapt to their defence and convinced the council to rethink the ban. As founder Chrissie Maher notes on the Plain English site, "You do have to question the good sense of anyone who thinks that confusion can be avoided by messing around with the rules of our language."

If you fall into the camp that thinks it's much ado about nothing, you might want to ponder this over your next meal: a missing apostrophe could mean all the difference between fine dining and cannibalism, as a couple of examples from *The Telegraph* show.

The first one is harmless: "Don't worry about dinner, I'll eat our son's." The second is a lot more worrisome: "Don't worry about dinner, I'll eat our sons."

"... the apostrophe agitation is a good reminder that we use language to get our message across . . . [and] that means following certain rules to avoid communication bedlam."

It's all in jest to a point, but the apostrophe agitation is a good reminder that we use language to get our message across. To make ourselves understood. And that means following certain rules to avoid communication bedlam. Otherwise, we're all just making up our own rules as we go, with *sons*, *son's*, and *s'ons* all meaning the same thing—depending on who's scribbling that note about dinner and whether or not they're a cannibal.

To avoid being the wrong kind of potluck guest—and to learn more about this useful little punctuation mark—check out The Apostrophe Protection Society [website](#). Just don't eat the apostrophes. You might be needing them later.

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?

Online Learning



Need to brush up your skills or pursue an area of interest, but don't want to take a formalized university course? As flexible learning becomes increasingly popular, more and more schools and organizations are offering online learning opportunities. Add two to the ever-growing list: Coursera and Udacity.

Coursera, “partners with the top universities in the world to offer courses online.” Courses come with a specific start date and run anywhere from four to

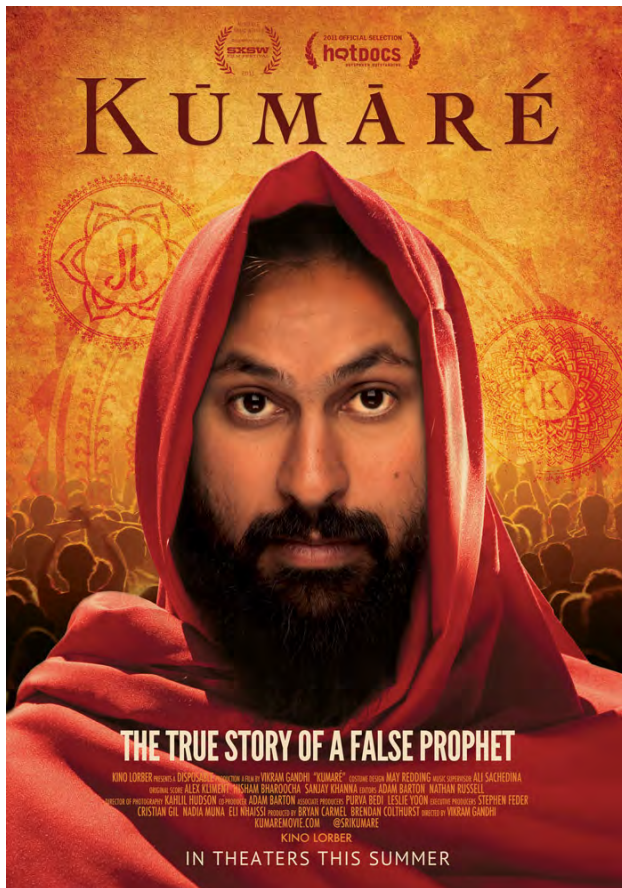
twelve weeks, and there are always new courses becoming available as the calendar progresses. Offerings range from English from Duke to organizational management from Vanderbilt to computer science from Princeton. Anyone can study with Coursera; all materials are freely available online.

Udacity takes a different approach; courses are also free, but are available via open enrollment. There are no deadlines. Instruction is accomplished through “bite-sized videos,” and the site offers forums and a place to arrange study groups and meetups. Current course offerings include business, computer science, math, and physics.



THE MINDFUL BARD

Wanda Waterman



Credit: Kino Lorber, Inc.

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

Film: *Kumaré***Director:** Vikram Gandhi**Genre:** Documentary

"She's a phony. But she's a real phony. You know why? Because she honestly believes all this phony junk she believes in."

from *Breakfast at Tiffany's*

"And they took him and brought him to the Areopagus, saying, 'May we know what this new teaching is which you are proclaiming? For you are bringing some strange things to our ears; so we want to know what these things mean.' (Now all the Athenians and the strangers visiting there used to spend their time in nothing other than telling or hearing something new.)"

Acts 17: 19-21

How Humbling It Is When Our Dupes Become Our Teachers

A middle-aged lawyer is confidently informing the camera that when she first spoke with Kumaré, she knew he was the real McCoy. She senses purity and honesty in him, and her instincts tell her to make him her guru and to do everything he tells her.

But Kumaré isn't real. He's the guru persona invented by Vikram Gandhi, an American agnostic who's just trying to find out what all the fuss is about. Having rejected the Hindu religion in which he'd been raised, he just doesn't get why so many Americans are now embracing Eastern mysticism.

Vikram Gandhi decides to conduct an existential experiment; he deliberately sets out to hoodwink as many people as possible. His religious background and his filmmaking skills render him uniquely qualified to do so. Unlike the vast bulk of self-described "gurus," he's not after money or sex. He's just looking for answers, though his motive is less than pure. He really is a modern enlightened cynic who doesn't see that religion fulfills any real human needs. He just wants to show people how dumb they are.

Gandhi grows his hair and beard very long and wears a loincloth, long robes, and pendants of doubtful significance, and carries a staff. Thanks to his parents, he has a large internal database of the lingo, practices, and concepts of Indian mysticism. And he adopts his grandmother's broken English and Brahman accent.

He's good to go. For some reason he chooses Phoenix, Arizona, just Western enough to be ever ready for the new, and already harbouring reams of "seekers"—a euphemism, apparently, for mostly white Americans who've worked so hard to purge themselves of traditional beliefs that they've become spiritual vacuums ready to suck up any balderdash that floats their way.

Gandhi is phenomenally successful, quickly developing a devoted following. He makes good eye contact, asks excellent questions, and listens intently to people, which right there is more than what most people can expect from churches, teachers, and psychoanalysts these days. He gives practical advice to those looking for someone to affirm their wisest instincts in this mad world. And even if he is taking these folks for a ride, it's not like he doesn't care; he helps his followers, and they in turn quickly grow to love him, attributing divine qualities to him.

Then comes the moment of reckoning—the time to abandon the charade, unmask, and let the people know they've been had.

But before that Vikram realizes he needs to do some serious soul-searching. He's become attached to these "followers" and doesn't want to hurt them. They've taught him something he could never have otherwise learned.

Kumaré manifests seven 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 provides respite from a sick and cruel world, a respite enabling me to renew myself for a return to mindful artistic endeavour; 4) it is about attainment of the true self; 5) it inspires an awareness of the sanctity of creation; 6) it displays an engagement with and compassionate response to suffering; and 7) it makes me appreciate that life is a complex and rare phenomenon, making living a unique opportunity.



Credit: Kino Lorber, Inc.



Credit: Kino Lorber, Inc.

INTERNATIONAL NEWS DESK



Around the World: All Moneyed Up and No Place to Go

What would you do if you suddenly became a multi-millionaire? Quit your job and live a life of luxury? Take an exotic vacation? Buy a bigger home or fancier car? Or pay off debt and then go on a little shopping spree?

For a recent Lotto Max winner, the question isn't so much what to do with the money but what to do with the time. As the *Edmonton Sun* reports, Darrell Szczerba, the Edmonton man who won \$30 million last month, is finding the life of a multi-millionaire a bit tedious. In fact, he's "contemplating a return to the daily grind just to alleviate boredom."

Currently Szczerba is considering "returning to work at the concrete restoration company" where he'd been employed prior to winning.

Szczerba's old boss told reporters that Szczerba is "a really grounded guy" and that "he's . . . used to going to work each day."

Though some are calling his actions bizarre, there's something to be said for the notion of sudden wealth not changing one's personality.

Around the World: Better Late Than Never

Had to make the library walk of shame recently? You know, the one where you clandestinely slip the long-overdue book onto the return table as though nothing was wrong—and then wait for the five-dollar fine to show up on your card? For one library patron, the stakes were quite a bit higher.

As *The Independent* reports, an elderly Estonian man recently returned a book that was 69 years overdue. The accumulated fine? Over £1400.

The man, who was in his late 80s, checked out *Kulmale Maale*, by Eduard Vilde, in March 1944—just days before the Nazi-occupied Estonian town was "damaged during a World War Two aerial bombing."

Although the library sustained damage during the air strike, it "remained open, and became a shelter for the librarians and nearby residents."

Now, almost seven decades later, it was time for the book to make its way home.

A librarian told reporters that the patron was "extremely sorry, almost tearful, and terribly frightened about the fine of the overdue book."

However, the library, happy to have the book back, waived the hefty fee.

AUSU UPDATE



Dear Members,

You may have recently seen information on the internet speculating about the future of Athabasca University. These reports suggest that the Alberta government may broker a merger between AU and University of Alberta, and that this may result in drastic changes to the services and programs offered to students AU students.

We want you to know that AUSU is aware of these rumours and is actively investigating the source – we will keep you informed as we know more.

We can tell you that AU is governed via a bicameral structure with two main governing bodies: the General Faculties Council (formerly Academic Council) and the Board of Governors (formerly Governing Council). AUSU has representatives on both of these governing bodies and we can confirm that there has been no formal discussion of a university merger among these groups. The AU president, Frits Pannekoek, has also assured the press that there is no truth to the rumour. On behalf of our members, we are seeking more information from the Board of Governors, the minister, and AU executives.

At this time we simply have no evidence that a merger is being seriously considered by AU, the U of A, or the Alberta government, and we note that among the many committees and working groups of AU, planning and development for the future continues as usual.

We know that our members are worried and want more information. We will update you as soon as we know more. At this time we do not feel there is any reason for students to worry or make changes to their study plans.

Do not hesitate to contact our office if you wish to talk about this or any other issue affecting AU students.

AUSU.

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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www.voicemagazine.org

The Voice is published every Friday in HTML and PDF format.

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