

THE VOICE

MAGAZINE

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Listmania

Great accomplishments

New in Music

The '60s are back

Behind the Door

A tale of honour

Plus:

Weird Canada

From Where I Sit

and much more!



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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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comments to voice@voicemagazine.org, and please
indicate if we may publish your letter.



GREAT LIST OF ACCOMPLISHMENT

Maxie van Roye



When summer began—or as soon as I got excited about summer beginning, which was back in March—I made a list.

I make a lot of lists. They are not especially successful, unless you count making the list itself as Task Number One. (I do.) But this time it was going to be different; I'd be with it. Organized. Forging ahead, chasing dreams, blah blah blah.

I made the list. The Great List of Summer Accomplishment. Why do I always include the words “great” and “accomplishment” in my list names? I'm sadistic, or a sucker, or just plain dumb, I guess.

The problem was that the list was big and long and sprawling—hence the “great”—and this characteristic kept me from accomplishing the “accomplishment” part. I was overwhelmed. I needed to subdivide the list, so I got a great planner to help me tackle my Great Accomplishment Monstrosity.

Actually, that name kind of describes my planner. It separates tasks into categories, days, and hours, and there are all kinds of columns and rows and general blank-lined goodness just waiting to organize my life. The problem: This planner is so awesome that it takes considerable effort to set it up. But I did it religiously, until I kind of stopped cold turkey because it was complicated and tiring and there's so much more to do in life than filling in a planner. Also, pretty much the only thing I *was* doing in life was filling in the planner, unless you count *Constantly check Facebook* as Task Number Two, and even I don't do that.

So it was back to the list drawing board. Instead of tasks, I made a new list of goals. These were more general than specific, which caused problems when I tried to figure out whether I could legitimately cross something out. Like *Teach my child a passage from Shakespeare*. How long is a passage? How many tears constitute success? Does it count if she memorized one line before the Shakespeare session descended into iambic pentametering of today's top 40? I mean, it was fun—aside from the tears part—though possibly less educational. Then somewhere between Shakespeare and *Go birding* I lost the list, and that was it for Great Goals of Accomplishment.

Since goal setting was clearly too arduous, I tried merely thinking about goals. This was fun. I spent a lot of time researching great places to go and great things to do, alternating with ordering massive quantities of books off Amazon. I was successful in all these endeavours—meaning the research and book buying, of course. Somehow nothing ever made it past the ethereal thinking stage, which meant that I had fun, though the intended beneficiaries of the fun did not.

But I really didn't feel guilty, and that's when it hit me. *Making lists is how I have fun*. I get a rush from list making, the same way normal people do when they skateboard or run marathons.

And that's why, when I realized summer's almost over and back-to-school season's upon us, my first thought was to get a list going. Because it's in making a dream list of stuff I'll never get done that I can cope with the future and relax and enjoy the living I'm doing right now.



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

Three Forward-Looking Backward Glances in Indie Rock

What kind of music would '60s musicians have created had they been able to listen to the various permutations of '60s music that have cropped up in the last 50 years? Put another way, what kind of music would Obama-era musicians create if they could go back in time and get creative all over again?

These three new summer albums, that's what. These *nouveaux bohémiens* are clever, musically erudite, idealistic, and incapable of taking themselves seriously. Plus they've let go of outmoded rules like the one that says you have to have the same musicians at every performance and recording. It's even more '60s-ish than the '60s.

It's apt that this music is emerging now. If the next president is an enigmatic, groundbreaking Democrat, we may be welcoming in another pop culture revolution. Who knows? All I can say is that after the last few dry years it's wonderful to finally find an exciting trend in alternative music.

Edward Sharpe & the Magnetic Zeros, *Edward Sharpe & the Magnetic Zeros*

"I feel the power. I'm tough enough to be a flower."

from "In the Lion"

In this LA-based alt-folk collective, songs are traded off between a mock-earnest male singer and a bold female vocalist with an enchanting lisp. Sensible ideas in the lyrics are promoted with heel-kicking hijinks, the most serious statements sung with a tongue-in-cheek pomposity. It's Leonard Cohen, spaghetti Westerns, Motown, gospel choir, Mariachi, protest songs, and Johnny Cash all rolled into one big bouncy psychedelic ball. For me the highlight track is "Two," which rivals *A Mighty Wind* for its uplifting spoof of sunny flower power naiveté.

Laurel Collective, *Heartbeat Underground*

"Tell me, Mr. Murgatroyd—am I a fucking droid?"

from "Barnacles"

On the other side of the drink is this London band that actually *calls* itself a collective and happens to be very involved with a famous secret festival called In the Forest. Think New Wave film soundtracks, early Pink Floyd, and experiments with acid to increase your creativity. With lots of electronic and rhythmic experimentation, their lyrical philosophy showcases punk's outsider sensibility. Nonetheless there's a generous dash of paisley idealism regarding what might be if we could all just be more free.

The Mountain Goats, *All Hail West Texas*

“Jeff and Cyrus believed in their hearts they were headed for stage lights and Lear jets and fortune and fame sewn in script that made prominent use of a pentagram and stenciled their drumheads and guitars with their names. This is how Cyrus got sent to the school where they told him he’d never be famous.”

from “The Best Ever Death Metal Band in Denton”

The Mountain Goats pull no punches when it comes to mocking the pretensions of both themselves and their peers. Here we have that wonderful Richie Havens-style thrashing acoustic guitar and the kind of sweeping spoken triplets we heard in the most energizing ’60s protest songs and spoken word, all sung in the slightly nerdy nasal vocals you might remember from folk songs sung by our camp counsellors around the fire. Incongruous with the music, the lyrics are shoe-gazing meditations on a firecracker relationship that slowly fades out due to the very lack of personal accountability that set the two on the open road adventure in the first place. Songs commemorating this ill-fated love affair use the same folk anthem style that was once used to protest Vietnam and concrete parking lots. Oft-repeated: “The pirate’s life for me.” Such fun.

DID YOU KNOW?

AU Press



Did you know that Athabasca University has its own scholarly press? AU Press has recently published its Fall 2013 catalogue of offerings, but many students don’t know about the Press, its offerings, and its mission.

Like most university presses, AU Press publications are peer-reviewed; editors subject all submissions to heavy scrutiny and only publish “scholarship of the highest quality.” Subject areas focus on geographical regions, including “Canada, the North American West, and the Circumpolar North.” The Press seeks to publish “innovative and experimental works” while “[promoting] neglected forms such as diary, memoir, and oral history.”

One unique facet of AU Press is that it is all about open access to scholarly material, via digital delivery and Creative Commons licensing where possible; AU Press is committed “to the dissemination of knowledge and research through open access digital journals and monographs, as well as through new electronic media.” This means that all AU Press publications—including books and scholarly journals—can be accessed, free of charge, via the Internet.

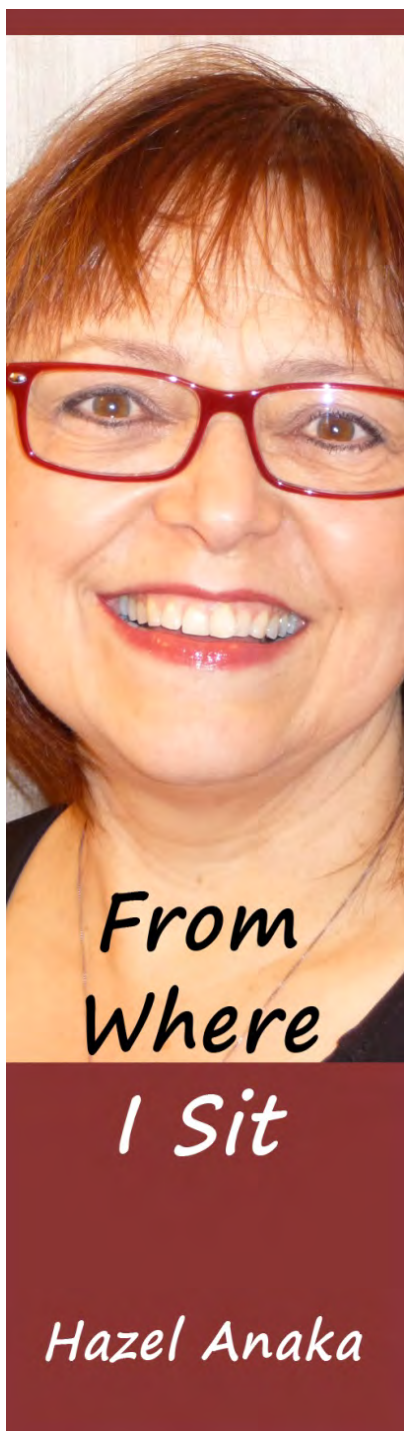
In addition to print-type publications like books and journals, AU Press publishes scholarly websites in line with its geographical focus and academic standards.

For further information, including current offerings, videos of book launches, author readings, and more, visit the [AU Press site](#).

COMIC: WEIRD CANADA

Wanda Waterman





No Brainer

I recently had the chance to attend the provincial Agricultural Service Board tour hosted by the Municipal District of Bonnyville. Roy was there as a delegate; I, as a partner.

I could ill afford to leave my work for the two and a half days of programming, but decided work be damned; I needed the mental and physical break from my desk.

Never in my life have I packed the morning of departure, but in this case it worked. I always feel a tingle of anticipation and adventure when Roy and I embark on a road trip, and this was no exception—even though Bonnyville is only an hour and a half away.

There is something both relaxing and exciting about hitting the open road. It's a world apart from the harried trips with a mile-long to-do list and a finite time to accomplish it all. There was time to stop along the way and put up Festival posters and to check out an old-fashioned two-storey general store that carries everything from produce to men's work boots.

For me there were several highlights of the companion program. Making a spring wreath at the Hamilton House B&B took me back to my days in the flower shop business. Organizers who only allowed an hour for shopping in Cold Lake should have been strung up. I spent the entire time at a consignment store, Ritzy Rags, and came home with a unique reversible jacket. Now I just need an appropriately snazzy place to wear it!

A trip to CFB Cold Lake's 4 Wing greenhouses was a hot and humid time. Tuesday was rounded out by an outdoor concert featuring George Canyon (a.k.a. Fred Lane), the Municipal District of Bonnyville's first by-law enforcement officer before he became rich and famous. He's a funny, talented, down-to-earth performer.

Wednesday's itinerary included a stop at Rocky Meadows. Who doesn't love pie and ice cream at 9:30 in the morning? Their mini-golf course holes include a seed drill, a combine, a grain auger, a collection of rubber boots, and more. Sea buckthorn jelly is my reminder of the stop.

I loved, loved, loved the next two stops: Ilchuk Gardens and the Ozero gardens. The places are just a mile or two apart, yet are distinctly different slices of paradise. The first is often a destination spot for weddings and wedding photo shoots. Three Model As become props; amazing hybrid peonies had the crowd agog. The Ozero garden is bright and beautiful and was featured in *Gardens West* magazine. I asked the owner if the furniture in the screened-in gazebo had ever been sat on. I couldn't imagine there was

ever time. Hydrangeas with melon-sized blossoms and potted tropicals were just some of the showstoppers.

A wine tasting lesson and tour of the nursery that provides hundreds of thousands of seedlings for reforestation and reclamation rounded out the afternoon. A banquet and entertainment by pianist extraordinaire Martin Janovsky brought the event to a close. Am I glad I played hooky? No brainer, from where I sit.

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

CLICK OF THE WRIST

Library Cool

The so-called dog days of August are here, and the AC's on the fritz—where better to cool off than the public library? Whether you're seeking a good read, something to watch, research tools, or one of the many, many other resources modern libraries have to offer, be sure to check out these links for some more library fun.

Library Search

Wading through Amazon's Best Books list—and curious about whether your local library carries a particularly intriguing novel? This browser add-on, designed for Google Chrome, will allow you to customize your Amazon browsing to connect to a participating library (including libraries in Canada, the US, and Australia).

Beautiful Spaces

A good book is a work of art, but some libraries are architectural wonders in and of themselves. Enjoy *mental_floss* magazine's list of the world's most beautiful libraries; you might be inspired to visit them for yourself!

Librarians Save the Day

They may not wear capes, but librarians are superheroes—and not just when they help you find that obscure reference book. Here's a slideshow of films that featured librarians who were cool, clever, and saved the day.



THE MINDFUL BARD

Wanda Waterman



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

Film: *The Locked Door* (China)

Director: Zhao Zhiping

Screenwriter: J. Nathaniel Berke

Cast: Huang Shengyi, Yang Zi, Calvin Sun, Wang Weixiang, Xu Songzi, Sun Tianyu, Li Man, Gao Jun

Genre: Drama

What Closes Doors, What Opens Them Again

One day while doing her chores, Yan Wen accidentally knocks down a key and wonders if it might belong to the great locked door that hasn't been opened since she was brought here. She tries it and encounters a story of repressive social mores that destroyed an artistic life.

Yan Wen knows something of this herself, having fallen in love with a man who used her and then betrayed her, leaving her to bear the brunt of shame for his callous act. How could she have known? He'd seemed like a prince; their early history was like one of those dramas prepubescent girls enact with their Barbies. *Here, honey, have a wad of cash. Go buy yourself the nicest dresses you can find and meet me at a posh restaurant.*

The film passes its message through a study of contrasts. For example, there are two great houses, each highly symbolic: the first a luxurious if somewhat cheesily decorated Western-style mansion, the second a sprawling traditional Chinese country retreat. The first is the perfect setting for the Barbie play, as delightful and as suspect. The second, though its context in the story is more tragic, is pulsing with integrity and permanence.

There's an interesting use of colour. At the very beginning of the film we find black and white cinematography that rivals *Citizen Kane's* masterpiece-per-second quality—mythic, focused, and rich in detail. Bit by bit, colour is added until we have a full muted spectrum to match the complexity of the film's sentiments.

Another interesting technique is the use of the short-term flashback; you've no sooner asked yourself why she looks so uncomfortable or why he suddenly starts crying than you're taken back in time to a brief but telling scene that was skipped the first time you viewed the event.

One significant contrast is that between Yan Wen's fiancé, Jin Ren, and the vagrant Zhang Tian, who for most of the film is referred to simply as "The Homeless Man."

Jin Ren is a respected hometown hero. He's returned from America, where he struck it rich and became Westernized. He's a dreamboat—a rich, flower-toting romantic—a great catch from all angles, impressing mom, pop, and sis all at once. But he turns out to be heartless, egotistical, and lacking in any sense of values outside of his own very blinkered sense of self-interest. The glamorous life he offers Yan Wen turns out to be just a smokescreen for his ill-fated addictions.

Zhang Tian starts out the film as a depressed, filthy, long-haired drunk. He's beaten up by Jin Ren's gambling buddies, who seem to be as drunk as he is, only cheerier and dressed in finer clothes. Jin Ren laughs and eggs them on.

The next day Zhang Tian is accused of rape and sent to prison, later demonstrating that sense of honour that is uniquely Chinese and that adorns the best of the country's films. *The Locked Door* offers us a sense of how honour can be subverted into a stick for beating all the precious things in life into submission. But this view is offset by the film's narrative evidence that honour can also be a heroic sacrifice for the righting of a wrong.

"That hunger of the flesh, that longing for ease, that terror of incarceration, that insistence on tribal honour being obeyed: all of that exists, and it exists everywhere."

Ben Kingsley

Feeling that he's ruined Yan Wen's life, as soon as his fortunes reverse Zhang Tian gives his life to making things up to her. Though he appears to be in love with her, he restrains himself as only a Chinese Tristan can do, sacrificing his desire to her chastity.

The locked room is filled with the sweet evidence of a life lived in love, art, and beauty. It was a false sense of honour that locked the door, and a relentless tragic leaning toward the sublime that opened it again.

The Locked Door manifests seven 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 inspires an awareness of the sanctity of creation; 5) it displays an engagement with and compassionate response to suffering; 6) it gives me tools of kindness, enabling me to respond with compassion and efficacy to the suffering around me; and 7) it makes me appreciate that life is a complex and rare phenomenon, making living a unique opportunity.

Wanda also penned the poems for the artist book They Tell My Tale to Children Now to Help Them to be Good, a collection of meditations on fairy tales, illustrated by artist Susan Malmstrom.

INTERNATIONAL NEWS DESK



At Home: Let There Be Light

There is art, and there is science. And then there are brilliant combinations of the two that are, quite literally, illuminating.

As the [CBC reports](#), a new installation at the Cathedral of the Holy Family in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, may be “the first cathedral windows in the world to integrate solar energy collection into their stained glass.” The cathedral plans to “use the solar power produced by the art installation to offset its own power consumption from the regular grid.”

The windows, by Toronto artist Sarah Hall, are created from hand-painted art glass overlaid with coloured solar cells. Although currently the windows are “being connected to Saskatoon Light & Power’s electrical distribution network,” cathedral facilities manager Jim Nakoneshny told reporters that the windows are “first and foremost . . . an art glass installation.”

The installation, called *Lux Gloria*, strives for both beauty and functionality. As Hall told reporters, “When you use art, you build a story into it that makes people notice in a way that they don’t if it’s just technology.”

Building-integrated photovoltaic systems—in which “solar panels are embedded directly into walls, windows or other parts of a building’s main structure”—are a growing trend in green energy research and development.

Around the World: Hand That Rocks the Cradle

Burglars have done some pretty funny things, like watching TV and helping themselves to the contents of the fridge. But one Indonesian burglar really made himself at home, deciding to take care of one of the residents whose dwelling he was robbing.

As the [Jakarta Globe reports](#), five robbers, armed with “guns, sharp weapons, a crowbar and duct tape,” a police spokesperson told reporters, entered a home around three in the morning. The men bound and gagged one of the maids, doing the same with the house owner, Fance Lewa, when she began screaming.

Then Lewa’s baby began screaming as well, and the burglars began to “panic.”

One, who told reporters that he “has a kid,” fed the crying child formula and rocked and cradled him back to sleep. After putting the baby in bed, the fatherly burglar continued to “rob the house, stealing a laptop, several smartphones, some cash, jewelry and other items worth a total of Rp 50 million (\$4,900).”

Several of the perpetrators, including the burglar who took care of the baby, were arrested a month later. They face eight to ten years in jail for the alleged crime.

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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