

THE VOICE

MAGAZINE

Vol 22 Issue 02 2014-01-10

Lack Resolve

Solving Resolutions

Science Be Praised

Concerning Trends

Top Tens

Mindful Podcasts

Plus:

From Where I Sit

Dear Barb

and much more!



CONTENTS

The Voice's interactive Table of Contents allows you to click a story title to jump to an article. Clicking the bottom right corner of any page returns you here. Some ads and graphics are also links.

Feature

Resolving to Abolish New Year's Resolutions 13

Articles

Editorial: *Re-Solved*..... 3

Columns

Gregor's Bed: *An American Poet in the Maritimes* 10

Writer's Toolbox: *I Resolve* 7

Dear Barb..... 4

Primal Numbers: *In Praise of Science* 5

From Where I Sit: *Top Ten*..... 11

Mindful Bard: *Ten Favourite Podcasts* 8

AUSU Update..... 16

News and Events

Did You Know?..... 14

International News Desk 6

Click of the Wrist 12

Comics

Weird Canada: *Charter of Values* 15

**The Voice
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www.voicemagazine.org

500 Energy Square
10109 – 106 ST NW
Edmonton AB
T5J 3L7

800.788.9041 ext. 2905

Email
voice@voicemagazine.org

Publisher
AU Students' Union

Editor-In-Chief
Tamra Ross

Managing Editor
Karl Low

Regular Contributors
Hazel Anaka
Katie D'Souza
S.D. Livingston
Wanda Waterman

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR



Hello,

E-texts will impact me in one of two ways:

1) Result in what's effectively a large tuition price increase (due to having to buy hard copy texts)

2) Contribute to an unhealthy learning environment (see below points)

When I first realized that some of my hard copy textbooks included a free e-text version I was thrilled. This meant that when I was mobile I could easily access all my texts. However, for the bulk of my studies, I still require hard copy for the following reasons:

- Eye strain: doing research, assignments, etc. on a computer is hard enough on the eyes – reading a hard copy text is a necessary break from the computer screen for me. Screen technology (glare) and size/ cost is not good enough yet for dedicated e-texts. Tablet screens are usually smaller than a page size, restrictively small for the fast reading that's required in university. Full colour screens are hard on the eyes. Softer e-books are black and white
- Reading position: I need to be able to change positions as I read, so as to not strain in any one position.

I believe that e-texts are the way of the future – once screen technology improves

THIS IS A FORM OF TUITION INCREASE: It is obvious that the student is receiving significantly less value while AU is saving considerable (distribution, cost of goods, etc.). It's like the consumer packaged goods industry where product portions are being reduced while keeping prices the same – in effect, a price increase. Unlike the free market, I believe there are limits to tuition increases per year?

Lastly, even if tablets overcame screen glare and size it would still be unfair that I had to buy one of these devices with no discount to offset the cost

Hope we can get this initiative dropped for the time being,
Shawn Stanley

Third Year AU Marketing Undergrad

Right with you on this one, but, honestly, there's no chance it's getting dropped at this point, too many things have been signed, from what I know. At best, we can hope that AU will still at least offer us a choice. –Karl

We love to hear from you! Send your questions and comments to voice@voicemagazine.org, and please indicate if we may publish your letter.

EDITORIAL

Karl Low

**Re-Solved.**

Welcome back, I hope you all had either a restful or exciting holiday, as is your preference. The beginning of January always strikes me as a bit of a strange time. Having just ended the month previous with a holiday, we should feel somewhat rested when it's time to return to work, but often it is just the opposite.

Christmas/Boxing/New Year's is one of the longer holidays we get in our society, and returning to work makes us realize all of the things we meant to get done, but simply didn't accomplish over the last year. And so we resolve to do better. A resolution, in a way, is an acknowledgment of a failure from the past year. Perhaps that's the "re" part of the word. We will try again to solve the problem that we obviously didn't manage to solve over the last 365 days.

Unfortunately, most of us tackle those problems in the exact same manner that we attempted to tackle them the year before, and so we often wind up with the same results. Fortunately for you, however, this issue has some advice on ways that we can turn resolutions into actual solutions. Whether that be with our returning advice column from Barb Godin, our feature article from Barb Lehtineimi that explores a new way to approach resolutions (using ways that echo back to an earlier column from S.D. Livingston on breaking habits), or perhaps it's more specific. Perhaps you want to become a better writer or communicator. Christina Frey's "The Writer's Toolbox" may be right up your alley.

On the other hand, perhaps you have no defined resolutions as yet, but are simply looking for ways to improve your mind. If that's the case, The Mindful Bard's Ten Favourite Podcasts, followed by S.D. Livingston's current Primal Numbers, "In Praise of Science" should be a treat for both sides of your brain, while Hazel Anaka's "From Where I Sit" reminds us how all the stories we get bombarded with at this time of the year may do the exact opposite.

Throw in a Weird Canada comic that I think is a good contender for next year's "Best of" issue, and a Gregor's Bed review of some poetry inspired music, and we have a very good way to start off this new year of *The Voice Magazine*.

My own resolutions are to get the larger Voice Student Survey out by the end of this month, so as to start our second give-away of a Samsung Galaxy Tab 3, and to expand The Voice Magazine into areas such as fiction, and more information about goings on at AU. I'm very happy to have you along for the ride!



Dear Barb:

I have a dilemma! My best friend John and I have been best buddies since grade school. Recently John and his girlfriend, Melissa, moved in together. At that time, I was attending university close to where they lived and was anxious to get out of my parent's home. Therefore John and Melissa suggested I move in with them. I readily agreed, as this arrangement was financially beneficial for all of us.

Through the years I had been acquainted with John's younger sister Kara, although I only saw her occasionally when I would meet up with John at his parent's home. Once I moved in with Melissa and John I began to see Kara frequently, as she often visited. Eventually Kara and I began hanging out together and discovered an attraction for each other and we thought we might like to date. Since John and I are such good friends I didn't see this as a problem. However, when I casually mentioned to John and Melissa that I was interested in dating Kara, I could tell by their reaction that they weren't comfortable with this. In fact, Melissa was quite straightforward and said "I can't believe you guys are doing this." Kara and I were confused but thought maybe we should try not to see each other, but the attraction was too strong. Now we are seeing each other secretly and we both feel awful. I really don't

know how to handle this situation. My relationship with John is very important to me. Subsequently, I feel like I'm between a rock and a hard place.

Pete.

Hi Pete,

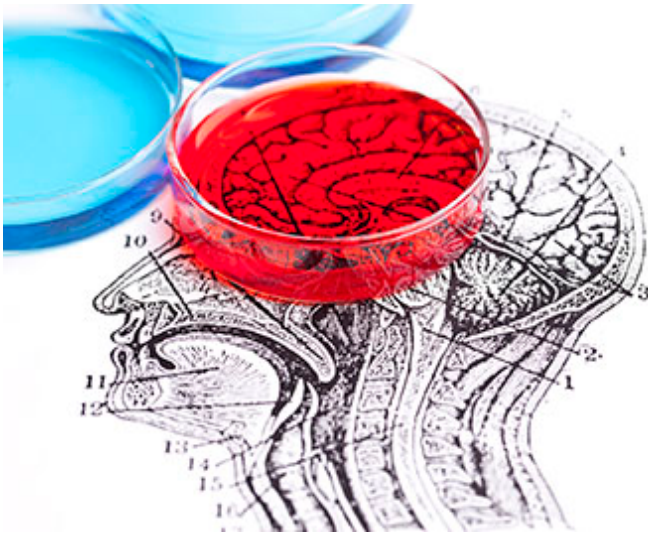
Thanks for writing in with your predicament. This is a complex situation and I can definitely sympathize with all of you. Obviously John and Melissa were shocked and totally unprepared for this attraction to develop between you and Kara. As you say, you have known his sister for many years, so John probably finds it odd that you two have suddenly developed an attraction for each other. Is there any reason why he would not want you to date his sister? Perhaps information about your past relationships that you may have shared with him. Also, I'm sure John feels a need to protect his little sister and make sure she is not going to get hurt.

On the other hand, I believe that as adults, we should be able to date whomever we choose. After all, Kara could turn out to be the love of your life and you will never know unless you act on it. Perhaps the four of you could sit down and openly discuss your feelings. If you and Kara continue to see each other in secret it will cause more dissension when it does come to light, and you know it will eventually. Following this discussion give John some time to digest the information. Be respectful of his feelings. Don't flaunt your relationship with his sister, but you should not have to hide it either. You have nothing to be ashamed of. Since you and John have been friends for so long, he may also be concerned with how this situation will impact his friendship with you. Without a doubt the nature of your relationship with John will change, but that doesn't have to be a bad thing. Continue to spend time with John so he will realize you guys will still be good friends. It may take some time for everyone to adjust. Hang in there Pete.

Email your questions to voice@voicemagazine.org. Some submissions may be edited for length or to protect confidentiality; your real name and location will never be printed. This column is for entertainment only. The author is not a professional counsellor and this column is not intended to take the place of professional advice.

Primal Numbers

S.D. Livingston



In Praise of Science

Here, just inside the threshold of 2014, it might seem like we've arrived in the sci-fi future at last. Digital devices rule and the first Mars One mission is only four years away. But the truth is that, even in the 21st century, science still faces an uphill battle against fear and superstition—and we're not as far removed from our salt-tossing, wood-knocking ancestors as we'd like to think.

Ritual and superstition are, of course, as old as the first *Homo sapiens* crouched around a

fire on a dark night. Engaging in rituals to ward off predators or appease the gods gave early humans a reassuring sense of control in a dangerous, unpredictable world. And superstitious rituals do make sense in other ways. As LiveScience reports, besides the usefulness of rituals as placebos, by “adopting a belief that you can—or cannot—do something to affect a desired outcome, you're among the cadre of beings that learn.” (Though it should be noted that pigeons are included in that group.)

But ritual and superstition have a much darker side—one that causes untold pain and suffering even in our supposedly enlightened age. Such beliefs exist around the world. In Bahrain, a member of parliament, Mohammed Buqais, recently “blasted his government for its failure to raise awareness about the threat of black magic to Bahraini citizens, and especially its children.” In Africa, a widespread “belief in black magic has led to dozens of murders,” as this LiveScience article reports. In Tanzania alone, at least 50 people with albinism were murdered for their body parts in 2008.

And in Canada and the US, there's no shortage of psychics and fortune tellers willing to part emotionally vulnerable people from their money. Like the Florida fortune teller who went on trial in 2012 for masterminding a \$25 million fraud.

The real problem, though, isn't that remnants of superstitious, irrational thinking persist on such a large scale. Instead, it's that, in North America at least, our governments seem to be taking steps backward from the rational, enquiring mindset of the Age of Enlightenment—the period in which reason was valued as a key attribute of power and authority.

We aren't exactly headed for another dark age but this *Maclean's* graph shows a worrisome trend in the publication of scientific research by Canada's National Research Council. After slow but steady growth from 1998 to 2006, the rate of peer-reviewed papers has seen a sharp fall: from close to 1,800 in 2006 to only 570 in 2012. The drop is tied in part to funding cuts, and a push by the federal government for research that focuses on industrial applications rather than research that might not have immediate practical (and profitable) uses.

As well, *Scientific American* reported in the fall of 2013 that US federal spending on research and development had “declined by 16.3% since 2010, the fastest drop in a three-year period since the end of the space race in the 1970s.”

Is there, as some critics believe, a war on science? Are we sliding backwards into a world ruled by superstition and amulets to appease the gods of rain and thunder? No, but we can’t forget that many of the benefits we enjoy—from germ research and sanitation to X-rays—are the result of hard work by rational, scientific minds, often in the face of ridicule and protest.

So as we kick off 2014, let’s resolve to give a little more love to the science in our lives. Check out blogs like Wired, the CBC Tech site, or New Scientist. Spare a few minutes to read that headline about science funding.

And if you don’t have time, well, you can always get your personal robot to do it.

S.D. Livingston is the author and creator of the Madeline M. Mystery Series for kids, as well as several books for older readers. Visit her website for information on her writing.

INTERNATIONAL NEWS DESK



At Home: Ontario Helps out part-time Post-Secondary Students

The Globe and Mail recently reported on regulation changes for Ontario universities that should make it easier for students on financial assistance or taking classes part time. In particular, part-time students will be charged on a per-credit basis, rather than a flat tuition fee, and universities will be prohibited from demanding the full tuition up front from funded students, instead having to collect monthly, as this more closely matches how students on OSAP are paid.

Perhaps unintentionally, this change may make it harder for AU to compete for Ontario students, as with the new restrictions, there is little need for OSAP to provide up-front tuition funding, a factor which could make AU unaffordable for many students.

Around the World: Cheaters on Trial in Atlanta

The New York Times is reporting on a scandal in Atlanta, Georgia, where it's the teachers, not the students, who've been cheating. 17 educators have already plead guilty to altering students tests to give them better marks. Some have been charged with racketeering, theft, and false testimony for altering these tests, which they did, in part, because teacher bonuses were tied directly to students test scores.

An inquiry conducted found at least 44 schools and over 170 teachers may have been involved in this activity, with it being so common and widespread that some administrators held "eraser parties" to correct the students' exams.

Writer's Toolbox

Christina M. Frey



I Resolve

There's something about writing that speaks to the essence of the human person. Or else perhaps it's the desire to create a tangible legacy, a readable witness to our goals, dreams, and aspirations. Or maybe it's as simple as keeping ourselves accountable. Whatever the reason, last week New Year's revellers picked up pen and paper—or turned to their keyboards—and began the first writing task of 2014: New Year's resolutions.

Did your resolutions include any writing-related goals this year? Whether you've resolved to revisit the draft you put together during November's [NaNoWriMo](#), turn that longtime idea into a self-help book, or just refine your essay-writing techniques, here are some steps to make this year's writing resolutions stick:

Ring in the new: It's never too late to learn new writing skills—or revisit those grammar lessons you barely remember from fourth grade. But there's no need to make a major commitment like a class (unless you want to!). Take it in little bits: subscribe to helpful blogs or podcasts ([Grammar Girl](#) is one of my favorites) or get a book and work through it page by page. And of course I'll continue offering tips and tools in this column. By the end of the year you'll be amazed at how much you've picked up.

You are what you read: You may be what you eat, but your writing is what you read. Or it can be if you focus your reading with an eye to improvement. If you want to become a better fiction writer, read excellent fiction and pay attention to the way the author crafted plot, characters, or dialogue; if you want to improve your essay-writing technique, read scholarly works and focus on structure, reasoning, and clarity.

Writers write: One of the best ways to improve your writing is by practicing, and this is true whether you're a budding novelist or a student with a stack of papers looming this semester. If you're looking to write books, short stories, or poetry, find a writing prompt site and challenge yourself to timed free writes on new topics or in new styles. If it's your academic writing that needs improvement, practice outlining or seek the guidance of an expert. A tutor or writing coach can work with you in person; or check out AU's [Write Site](#), a fantastic (and free) resource for AU students.

Edit, edit, edit: No one can write a perfect draft—not even Ernest Hemingway, who famously said, “The first draft of anything is shit.” Plan to go back and edit everything you write, working through it carefully to ensure it's clear, concise, readable, and as error-free as possible. This applies to research papers and essays too, so be sure to schedule in time to edit your drafts before submitting them.

2014 is a blank page metaphorically, but hopefully it will include some actual writing as well. Try working a few of these suggestions into your resolutions, and 2014 could be your best writing year yet.

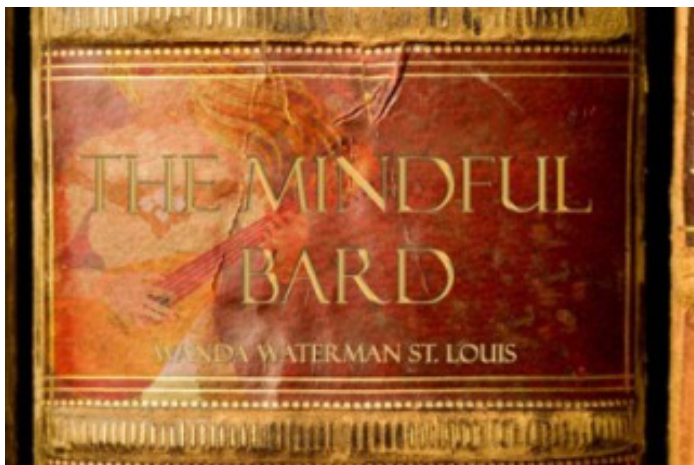
Christina M. Frey is a book editor and a lover of great writing. Chat with her on Twitter about all things literary @turntopage2.

Mindful Bard

Wanda Waterman

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

The Mindful Bard's Ten Favourite Podcasts



We have two ears and one mouth, so we should listen more than we say.

Zeno of Citium, as quoted by Diogenes Laërtius

True, the Mindful Bard is normally about books, music, and film, but once in a while we're compelled to branch out into other formats, especially in the digital age when websites, film shorts, and even games offer the possibility of inspiring artists to better and more mindful art. Who knows? You may one day see a Bard piece on the most creatively stimulating television commercials—nah, not really.

But the fact is that podcasts are such an amazing resource for creative people that I simply can't ignore them.

It's only been in the last year that I've discovered the great intellectual wasteland that comprises today's podcast scene. I've also discovered what a rich resource the few good podcasts can be: both as sources of information and creative stimulation, and as a way of keeping the artist's mind alive during boring activities. Like the radio from whose venerable origins they sprang, podcasts are a smart medium.

The podcasts I've included here have skirted the error of mindless rambling and joshing that only infuriates a listener who is desperate for someone to stop giggling and get to the point. The podcasters below have chosen relevant topics, discussed the most relevant aspects of those topics, and given good audio—clear and listenable—and not packed too tight with pointless noise.

After a year of searching and listening, here are the Mindful best:

The Organist

The opening monologue plays out to— you guessed it— what sounds like Aunt Winnifred ploughing away on the parlour organ. This one comes from *The Believer* magazine and has all the intimate intellectual ambience of midnight in an all-night café after watching the best foreign film you've ever seen and discussing it with your most insightful chum.

Radiolab

The trivia this crew digs up to help us remember facts we would normally consider too dry to retain in our memories (why the American constitution is so vague, for example) is extremely entertaining. I wish these folks had been my teachers in high school.

TEDtalks (audio and video)

TEDtalks has become famous enough to be satirized, the satires usually playing on the propensity of some of the talks to be full of sound and fury and signifying nothing. But this does nothing to change to the myriad wonderful and highly relevant lectures delivered by TEDtalks.

Poems Every Child Should Know

There's no background music. The voice is like that of a grade school teacher, dry and expressionless with the occasional lilt. The choice of poems and the commentary is way over the heads of most children I know. But for some reason it's very inspiring. From Lewis Carroll to Blake to Walt Whitman, these are poems of simplicity and significance. Keep 'em coming.

Broken Mirrors

A bit of a subgenre, dealing with things like foreign policy, economics, and terrorism but focused on such engaging details and research and recorded by such pleasant voices that it goes down like butterscotch. There's lots of interesting fodder for your next dinner conversation to be found here.

CBC Radio: Wiretap

This is just plain genius. Jonathan Goldstein does absurd monologues and talks to friends and family on the phone. It's Kafka light. Life won't seem so serious after a listen, and at the same time will seem more deeply significant.

Benjamin Walker's Theory of Everything

Another breeze from a world of genius, but this one contains more philosophical reflections on topics no one else seems to have the time to reflect on. Both witty and profound.

CBC Radio: Ideas

This is the top of the heap, the podcast from the lauded nightly radio broadcast of the same name. It's amazing how this crew comes up with so many topics so deeply important to creative types and social activists. And take it from me, it really does prompt change.

Philosophy Bites

Difficult ideas from the history of philosophy, for the layperson, presented as discussions between a couple of brilliant minds. At the very least, it will simply make you feel smarter.

All in the Mind

Every artist needs to study a little psychology, period. This program cuts through mountains of new research to bring you findings that may surprise you, insights into your own quirks, and stimulating concepts. Sometimes the transcript is even provided, which is nice if you just want to read it on your smart phone.

Gregor's Bed

Wanda Waterman

An American Poet in the Maritimes, and Those Who Love Her



Album: *I Am In Need of Music*

Artist: Suzie LeBlanc

*I am in need of music that would flow
Over my fretful, feeling fingertips,
Over my bitter-tainted, trembling lips,
With melody, deep, clear, and liquid-slow.
Oh, for the healing swaying, old and low,
Of some song sung to rest the tired dead,
A song to fall like water on my head,
And over quivering limbs, dream flushed to glow!*
- Elizabeth Bishop, from the poem "I Am in Need of Music"

A few years back two Nova Scotians, soprano Suzie LeBlanc and artist Linda Rae Dornan, up and decided to hike through Newfoundland with a tome of Elizabeth Bishop's poems. They were attempting to follow the route that the poet herself took in 1932. Dornan documented the walk on video, later producing the documentary, "Walking with EB."

When you read a little of Bishop's poetry you can see why it would inspire someone to put everything else on hold and mindfully retrace her steps, even if much of the route has since wiped out or replaced by highways. Elizabeth Bishop was an intriguing personage who left a legacy of extremely intriguing work, presenting a view of the world that departed significantly from convention.

Born in Massachusetts in 1922, she became a major American poet of the twentieth century. Her Canadian connection, and the reason why she was drawn to the bosoms of Nova Scotia's literati, was the home of her Nova Scotian grandparents—to which she was sent to be raised at an early age after her father died and her mother was committed to a mental asylum. The Maritime Provinces inspired some of her best work.

This is my first mindful encounter with Suzie LeBlanc's voice, which I understand has applied itself mostly to early music. She sounds amazing here, but I suspect that the artistic fullness and perfection of her delivery might have something to do with her passion and full participation in every step of this project as well as the pains she took to enter Bishop's mind and to see things as she had seen them—a very tall order.

This CD was one of the Legacy Projects from Nova Scotia's Elizabeth Bishop Centenary Festival of 2011. It brought to life the brainchild of Suzie LeBlanc and Sandra Berry, the EB Players. Directed by Dinuk Wijeratne they recorded ten settings of Bishop poems by Canadian Composers Emily Doolittle, Christos Hatzis, Alasdair MacLean, and John Plant.

The music might be called "new art song" as it's firmly rooted in the art song tradition with all its inherent romanticism, but at the same time branches out rhapsodically in contemporary directions. LeBlanc delivers a driving pulse that grows more intense at the end of each beat. Emily Doolittle's contributions hark back to Stravinsky and Prokofiev, while the settings created by Christos Hatzis are more romantic and Copelandesque. ("Insomnia" is a high point, touching on blues, country, and Hollywood's Golden Age.)

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.



Top Ten

You've got to love traditions whether they're your own or someone else's. I know some people (okay, it's us) who order KFC for Christmas Eve supper while others order Chinese takeout. Some people don't think New Year's Eve is complete without cracking open a bottle of champagne or watching the ball drop in Time Square.

These practices may seem strange or lame to those who have more exciting ones. Some years we host or attend a New Year's Eve get-together and stay up until midnight. Woohoo.

One of the things I happen to love as one year winds down and another starts are all the compilations and lists put together in a sort of year-in-review montage. There are the grisly top ten crime stories that remind us some lives have been forever altered by the actions of others. The landmark sentencing of Travis Baumgartner for the murder of three armoured car colleagues takes us back to that breaking story of 2012.

Or a recap of political stories remind us Ralph Klein died, Don Getty got an honorary degree and Alison Redford earned a seventy-seven percent approval rating at the party's AGM. In entertainment news we're forced to yet again, watch Miley Cyrus twerk and more in her 'daring' distancing from alter ego Hannah Montana.

And you've got to know that Rob Ford would make it onto several lists including Time's Top 10 Apologies (at number 2) and Top 10 Scandals (at number 4). In fact, he was named Canadian Newsmaker of the Year by editors and news directors across the country and garnered more US media coverage than any other Canadian story in decades. To late night comedians he was manna from heaven.

And then there was Mike Duffy and company. Enough said.

There are the top weather stories; best and worst lists for books, movies, and videos; best and worst dressed lists; best commercials, apps, and gadgets; and honour roles for those who've died. Prince George's birth will be noted as will Nelson Mandela's death. I wonder where the sign language imposter will fit? Or the Ukrainian protests at Euromaidan?

Another December tradition is the televising of year-end messages from Queen Elizabeth, Prime Minister Harper and Premier Redford. It really is a quaint little custom. With everyone covering everything in real time through Twitter, Facebook, and news broadcast crawlers is there really anything they can say to us that we haven't already heard several times over?

Maybe, therein lies a problem I hadn't considered before. We are so bombarded with the tragic, the trivial, the bizarre, and the ridiculous—morning, noon, and night—that we have become spectators. We're so busy watching, reading about, or listening to the "stuff" out there that we lose sight of our own news and its significance in our own lives. Our own activities, accomplishments, and disappointments are lost to us. We can't remember, analyze, or learn from them if we allow everything else to drown them out. Let's consider the top ten lists we made in 2013, 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

In February, the 2014 Winter Olympics are starting in Sochi Russia. Soon we'll be hearing all we want to and more about this DVR filling extravaganza, but to get you up to speed before the games start, here are a few links that you should look into.

The Official Site

We'd be remiss if we didn't start with the official site of the 2014 games. This site has the schedule of all the games as well as links to more details about each event, including the opening and closing ceremonies. It already has a lot of information, including videos of the venues that the events will be taking place at.

CAN Fund

Being a world class athlete isn't easy, and it's certainly not cheap. CAN Fund (more specifically, Canadian Athletes Now Fund) gives money directly to athletes to help them with things like food, rent, travel expenses, and coaching and training expenses. Being the best in the world isn't something you become by doing it part-time, after all, yet these people still need to put food on the table—and healthy food isn't cheap either. A lot of people think that our government supports these athletes, like happens in many other countries, but the truth is that athletic support from the Canadian government is extremely limited. This site can give you a lot more information, and your support for an athlete may make the difference between being able to train for those extra few hours or having to spend it at a part-time job instead.

Canadian Athletes

Want to know who we're sending to the Olympic games? This is the site for you. With information not only about who is making up our 2014 Winter Olympic Games team, but information about each individual member as well, including their twitter accounts if you're of a mind to follow them that way.

Olympic Fever



Resolving To Abolish New Year's Resolutions

Barbara Lehtiniemi



If you're going to make only one resolution for 2014, resolve to make no New Year's resolutions. Often they don't work, they're soon broken, and then the whole year is shot. There is a better way.

The beginning of the year holds some special enchantment for resolutions, but it's artificial. The first of the year could be any date on the calendar. For example, at one time the year began on March first, which is why September, October, November, and December take the Latin names for the seventh, eighth, ninth, and tenth

months. Yes, the beginning of a new year does present a good opportunity to reflect on the year just finished and make plans for the year ahead. But if you couldn't resolve to <insert resolution of your choice here> by the end of last year, how is this year going to be any different?

Consider the first of January. You're tired from staying up late New Year's Eve. You're stressed from the holidays. The house is full of leftover sweets, cookies, and gifts of wine. Your wallet is bursting with gift cards that will enable you to indulge in your favourite obsessions. Does this sound like an optimal climate for an exercise in willpower?

So, relax. Here's what you do: spend the rest of January making a plan for 2014. What do you want to tackle first? Getting up earlier? Studying harder? Walking a block a day? Resisting chocolate? Resisting Facebook? Select one as your February goal. And make it a goal for only one month.

Part of the reason why New Year's resolutions fail is the overwhelming thought of doing something (or not doing something) for a whole year. That's 365 days, any one of which could be the day your resolve falters. If you plan for only one month, you've made the task much more doable. Compare this: "I'm going to get up 15 minutes earlier every day for 365 days," to this: "I'm going to get up 15 minutes earlier every day for 31 days." Thirty-one days (or 28 if you're starting in February) seems more achievable.

By the end of the month, you've developed a new habit, broken an old one, or made a positive change in your routine. You're getting up 15 minutes earlier each day without even thinking about it! You only need willpower for one month. By the end of the third week your new habit is so well-established you just coast through the last week. You continue on for the rest of the year without any effort.

With that success in mind you can begin your March resolution. Another month, another objective. If you falter and need to begin again then you've only slipped for one month, not an entire year. At the end of 2014

you will have fulfilled ten or so resolutions. If you had begun all ten on January first, however, how many would you have expected to succeed at all year through?

Another difficulty with beginning the year with a list of resolutions is that there just isn't enough willpower to go around. In their book *Willpower: Rediscovering the Greatest Human Strength*, authors Roy F. Baumeister and John Tierney explain, "No one has enough willpower for that list. Because you have only one supply of willpower, the different New Year's resolutions all compete with one another. Each time you try to follow one, you reduce your capacity for all the others." Willpower is a finite resource: use it for one resolution and you won't have enough for all the others.

One strategy that Gretchen Rubin employed in her best-selling book *The Happiness Project* was to cluster several resolutions around a monthly theme. Be careful not to overdo it though; remember your willpower will only extend so far. Have one important resolution each month and then add a few one-off tasks to be completed by month's end. For example, if your main objective is to study three hours every day, a supplementary goal could be to learn to use that scheduling software you've been meaning to master. And perhaps you could plan to spend one afternoon cleaning off your desk. All three are related but only the first one requires an ongoing expenditure of your limited willpower.

So, take your New Year's resolution list and break it down into manageable monthly portions. Apply your willpower to one major resolution per month. Add one or two small tasks to complement your resolution. At the end of each month, congratulate yourself and look forward confidently to the next month. At year's end, you will have accomplished so much more than if you had run full-throttle with a daunting collection of New Year's resolutions.

Barbara Lehtiniemi is a writer, photographer, and AU student. She lives on a windswept rural road in Eastern Ontario

DID YOU KNOW?

Online Course Catalog



With the arrival of online courses, from MOOCs to SPOCs to everything in between, the question becomes not if there's a course for your particular interest, but rather where it is that you can find it.

To help with that, the site Online College Courses has been created, providing a list of open college courses from Harvard, Stanford, Princeton, and even courses from Oxford. Just remember when you go that the large blue area at the top of the page is actually a sponsor's link. The useful information is below that, starting with the "Browse by Category" tool. Find it at: <http://www.onlinecourses.com/>


Comic

Wanda Waterman

Weird Canada

The Proposed Quebec Charter of Values...

THE QUEBEC CHARTER OF VALUES PROPOSED BY THE PARTI QUEBECOIS SEEKS TO DENY PUBLIC WORKERS, INCLUDING TEACHERS AND DAYCARE WORKERS, THE RIGHT TO WEAR RELIGIOUS SYMBOLS SUCH AS TURBANS, YARMULKES, HIJABS, OR CROSSES (OVER A CERTAIN SIZE) WHILE AT WORK. WHAT IF, WHEN THE FRENCH FIRST SETTLED IN WHAT IS NOW QUEBEC, THE RESIDENTS HAD REQUIRED THEM TO DENY THEIR RELIGION?



Okay, you can hunt with us,
but only if you promise not
to say "tabernac."

FINE, DEN, I WILL 'UNT BY MYSELF,
BY DE SHIT!

YEAH, WELL, GOOD LUCK WITH THAT.

WANDA WATERMAN

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.

CLASSIFIEDS

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

THE VOICE

500 Energy Square - 10109 - 106 St NW - Edmonton AB - T5J 3L7
- Ph: 800.788.9041 ext. 2905 - Fax: 780.497.7003 attn: Voice Editor

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