

# THE VOICE

## MAGAZINE

Vol 22 Issue 03 2014-01-17

### Weighty Issues

Beyond Diet and Exercise

### Sieze the Day

Photographic Motivation

### Call Centres

Dictated Thoughts

*Plus:*

*From Where I Sit  
Writer's Toolbox  
and much more!*



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***The Voice  
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# LETTERS TO THE EDITOR



**We love to hear from you! Send your questions and comments to [voice@voicemagazine.org](mailto:voice@voicemagazine.org), and please indicate if we may publish your letter.**

## EDITORIAL

Karl Low

**Surprising Things I Think.**

This week's "Did You Know?" article features some comments made in the *Athabasca Advocate* about AU moving to a call centre model. I was quite surprised when I read it, because, apparently, I view call centres as a positive step toward restructuring AU. At least, this is what the president of the Graduate Students' Association, Amanda Nielsen, has claimed.

Personally, I find this very odd, as I've never spoken to Amanda about this issue, nor answered any sort of graduate student survey on this issue, nor for that matter, even seen such a thing. The only time I've been asked about this issue, actually, is with AUSU's survey (not even one from AU), and in that, I believe I was pretty emphatic about how the call centre's were not a good step toward restructuring AU. Further, from what I recall of the results of that survey, the bulk of respondents, even among those who'd taken courses in the School of Business that use the call centre model, were not terribly thrilled with the idea.

If you look at AUSU's [results on this survey](#) (pdf link), you see that only 6% of the students actually think this is a good way for the University to save money. That number increases to about 46% if AU uses the savings to reduce course fees, but there are absolute no indications (nor, if we're being honest, reasonable expectations) that this will happen. So you can understand why I was quite surprised to find out from Amanda that this is what I think. Is this what you think as well? Perhaps I'm wrong and we all secretly think this, we just don't know it. Feel free to let me know at [voice@voicemagazine.org](mailto:voice@voicemagazine.org).

What is not so surprising, however, is that I think we have another strong issue of *The Voice Magazine* here for your entertainment and education. Our Feature Article this week comes from Katie D'Souza, a health studies graduate of AU, and who gives us some timely advice on ways we might work to keep our weight-loss resolution that go beyond simply a better diet and more exercise. In The Writer's Toolbox, Christina M. Frey helps us write correctly from here forward, but not forwards. As well, S.D. Livingston looks at a pill that could make it easier for us to learn, but points out it may not be the panacea it seems. Gregor's Bed is interesting not just for the review, this week, but also has a small lesson in musicology this week.

If you're looking for a real time-waster, I encourage you to read the Mindful Bard and, in particular, follow the link for the Vancouver Film School's youtube channel. But don't if you've got a deadline looming—you've been warned. Not to mention the other content, including articles from Barbara Lehtiniemi, Hazel Anaka, and advice from Barb Godin to keep you inspired, entertained, and hopeful.

And when it comes to how thoughts can surprise us, we close out this week with Chazz Bravado. You'll get it when you read the comic.

A stylized, handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Karl".



Dear  
Barb

Barbara Godin

### Dear Barb:

*I have been dating my boyfriend for two years. I am finding this relationship increasingly difficult. Part of me wants to end it, the other part of me wants it to work out. When we began dating Jay was sweet, charming, and attentive. After a few months he seemed to become controlling and possessive. He's always asking me where I'm going and with whom. He doesn't even want me to talk to my girlfriends anymore. I'm starting to feel smothered! It didn't bother me too much initially, but now it is becoming a major problem between us. We argue almost daily. At times Jay makes accusations that are very hurtful and upsetting to me. I've tried to explain that I am not doing anything wrong. Occasionally he realizes how irrational he is and apologizes. Things improve for a while, but eventually it all starts again.*

*There are so many good things about Jay. He is a smart, loving, hardworking guy with a great personality. I am definitely in love with him. I guess I'm wondering what I can do to make Jay realize he can trust me. I just don't know if this relationship is worth saving or would I be better off just ending it? Looking forward to your advice.*

Jen

Hi Jen,

Thanks for your question. I sense your frustration with this relationship. You clearly care deeply for this man and want the relationship to work, but you are not happy with his distrust and accusations. I suspect Jay is not happy either. Does he realize how much his jealous, controlling behaviour is affecting your relationship? Explain how hurtful it is to you that he doesn't trust you, and that you are seriously considering ending the relationship if he doesn't do something about this conduct. This is not a healthy relationship for either of you. As his suspicions escalate, you may become angry and resentful and this will affect all areas of your relationship. If Jay wants to be with you he will have to try to find the root cause of his jealousy and learn ways to control it. I would suggest you seek counselling to help you both work through these issues. It is possible that you may be triggering something in each other that is causing this interaction. Jealousy is often the result of insecurities within a person. Therefore, Jay may have to go for individual counselling as well as couple's counselling.

Obviously, you see many positives qualities about Jay. Therefore, I would not advise you to give up on this relationship. If you are both willing to go for counselling, there is a mutual commitment and desire to make this relationship work. In any relationship, half the battle is both parties committing to put forth the effort necessary to work through the issues. So, Jen, don't give up yet, I believe there is still hope!

*Email your questions to [voice@voicemagazine.org](mailto: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.*



## Health Matters

Katie D'Souza, Bsc ND



### Weight Loss: More Than Diet and Exercise

We start off every new year with a bang: big resolutions, big plans for weight loss and healthy living, and big expectations for results. But when the results are slow to come, we can get frustrated and consider throwing in the towel. Is that where you're at with your health-related resolutions? Has the scale refused to budge no matter how faithfully you've been putting in time at the gym and passing up dessert? In this two-part series, we'll explore how weight loss is more complex than diet and exercise, and discuss some obstacles that are holding you back from achieving your healthy weight goals. And it doesn't mean more time on the treadmill.

#### **Stress: the Resolution-Killer**

Stress, stress, stress: it's become the scapegoat for many health problems. But did you know that stress is the number one killer of weight loss efforts? In fact, the more stressed you are, the more your body works against you. And the harder time you'll have losing those unwanted pounds.

When you're under stress, your body uses its resources to help you get through the stressful situation. You've heard of the "fight-or-flight" reaction—should the body run from the stress or stay and fight it? To help you make the decision, your body stimulates the adrenal glands, which produce adrenaline (that hormone that can make people move heavy weights and perform other feats under stress)

So far, so good. It's how the body protects itself. The problem occurs when a stressful situation is prolonged. When the issue doesn't go away in 18 minutes—and modern-day stressors like family problems, stressful work situations, money woes, etc. tend to last quite a bit longer—the body turns to cortisol production as a long-term coping mechanism.

Cortisol may have been helpful during prehistoric times, but in today's world it's your enemy. It does three things: raises blood sugar, raises blood pressure, and alters your immune system, but it's the first that really affects your weight loss goals.

When your blood sugar is high, your body produces more insulin (this is why diabetics, who have difficulty processing insulin, need to carefully regulate their blood sugar levels). Increased insulin production triggers increased activity of the lipoprotein lipase, which means greater fat storage. It's a chain and cascade effect: more stress means higher blood sugar, more insulin, and more fat storage. And it keeps packing it on no matter how much time you spend at the gym.

As if cortisol production weren't bad enough, your belly fat cells contain four times as many cortisol receptors as other fat cells. This results in what's called the cortisol ring: that ring of tummy fat that's particularly tough to dissolve.

## The Mechanics of Fat Loss

Stress has another negative effect on weight loss: it makes fat loss happen less efficiently. Remember that fat loss, or lipolysis, doesn't mean that fat cells disappear, they just empty and shrink. Normal, healthy fat cells open wide during lipolysis—up to 70% open. But when you are under stress, fat cells only open up 40%. That's a big difference and can drastically slow down how quickly you drop those pounds or inches. It means you need to work harder for a diminished result (which, of course, creates more stress).

## Attacking Stress the Healthy Way

Stress is a part of modern life, but it doesn't have to destroy your health. These four strategies can increase your mental and physical well-being, lower cortisol production, and ultimately help you with those weight loss goals and healthy resolutions:

- *Take care of yourself.* According to the Harvard Mind-Body Institute, engaging in a relaxing, self-directed activity for fifteen minutes a day has the power to lower blood cortisol. This can be as complicated as a painting class or yoga session or as simple as a cup of tea and a book or a jog around the block. It doesn't matter what you do, as long as it's self-initiated—and not something on your to-do list.
- *Take your time.* If you're short on time and stressing out about it. Then, for your health's sake, it's even more important to take those fifteen minutes to yourself. You'll lower your cortisol levels and improve your mood, making it easier for you to handle the stressful situation in the first place.
- *Focus on the good.* It may be your least natural reaction, but focussing on the good in a situation can do a lot to lower your stress levels. For example, if your boss is being rude and demanding, try to think about good aspects of the situation: I have a job. I'm competent to do it, no matter what my boss says.
- *Cut out alcohol.* Experts keep going back and forth on the health benefits of wine, for example, but if you're hoping to lose weight you should cut back on or cut out your alcohol consumption. This isn't just because of the calories (around 100 calories for a glass of wine—and up to 500 calories for a frothy, sugary mixed drink), either. Research shows that one glass of wine turns up your body's cortisol production, something you definitely don't want to encourage.

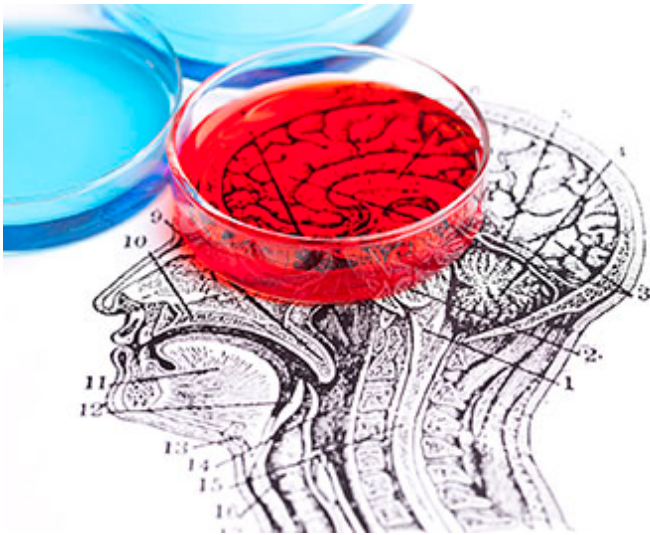
If you're struggling with insomnia, change your thinking: instead of "Help! I'll never be able to sleep!" think "because I'm not sleeping, I have more time to meditate." Sound too Pollyanna-ish? It's okay to fake it until you make it; facing your stressors in a positive manner breeds positive adaptive strategies. Then your body feels like it's in control, which means lowered cortisol, or stress hormone, production.

Next week, we'll look at the role of the thyroid in enhancing and inhibiting weight loss. In the meantime, if you've made good resolutions and tried to stick to them without success, try reducing stress and cortisol production by taking care of yourself, focusing on the good, and cutting out alcohol. You might just have your weight loss goals within reach!

*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.*

## Primal Numbers



circuits in our brains. The foundations of those skills, from catching a baseball to playing a concerto, are shaped by early experiences and built when our brains are in the most adaptable stage of our lives.

As this *New Scientist* [article](#) explains, “the brain is said to have increased plasticity” during the highly critical phase from birth to about age seven. As we get older, those high levels of plasticity shift into a lower gear, in part because of the enzyme histone deacetylase (HDAC). However, researchers have found that a handful of existing drugs (such as valproate, used to treat bipolar disorder) inhibit HDAC.

The result? Use of the drug, alongside training in a new skill, has shown to be a “promising first step towards demonstrating that critical-period learning can happen in adults.” And it’s not just for developing a talent like perfect musical pitch. The treatment also shows potential for curing conditions like amblyopia (lazy eye), helping rewire the brain’s circuitry.

In cases where patients have an existing condition or disability, this research could well be a life-changer. But what if a pill truly could help you become a musical genius or science whiz? Would you take it if there was a chance you could reach the top of your chosen career? Before you start practising for your Carnegie Hall solo, ponder this old adage for a moment: if it ain’t broke, don’t fix it.

In other words, would you jeopardize the skills you do have on the chance that you could become a famous ball player with incredible reflexes? After all, it stands to reason that putting your brain into rewire mode won’t just make new neural connections. It will probably alter (for better or worse) many of the connections your brain has already built all on its own. Science is still mapping the complex workings of the human brain, and even such outdated myths as being left-brained or right-brained are as persistent as Centaurian slugs.

Then there’s the phenomenon of late bloomers—those great talents who didn’t even approach the starting line until later in life. This *Huffington Post* [article](#) lists nearly a dozen. Like Julia Child, who “didn’t even learn to cook until she was almost 40 and didn’t launch her popular show until she was 50.” Or Spider-Man creator Stan Lee, who was “43 when he began drawing his legendary superheroes.”

Rewiring the brain to help with medical conditions? Brilliant. But if I really want to master a new language, I think I’ll do it the old-fashioned way: move to Paris and practice ordering crème-brûlée.

*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.*

**S.D. Livingston**

## Skill in a Pill

Usually, the term “baby brain” refers to the time when a pregnant woman’s memory turns into a black hole—a frustrating void of lost car keys and missed appointments. But the brains of babies themselves are incredibly busy, with all circuits firing in an accelerated, highly adaptable learning mode that we lose around age seven. Now, science has found a way to give us back our baby brains. But can we really achieve skill from a pill?

Based on early research, the signs point to a very real possibility that we can master new skills by manipulating a certain enzyme to lay down new



## Writer's Toolbox



Christina M. Frey

### Warding Off Confusion

Forward and backwards. Or is it backward and forwards? Sometimes these words can make you feel like you're on a seesaw of uncertainty, and when you add correct versus colloquial usage and British and American preferences to the mix, the ride gets even dizzier. In this Writer's Toolbox, I'll try to clear up the confusion—so that you can move forward in your writing.

#### British versus US English

*Forward(s)*, *backward(s)*, *toward(s)*, and *afterward(s)* make a messy group of words at the best of times. To add an "s" or not? Although it can depend on whether the words are being used as adverbs, nouns, or adjectives, for adverbs the US standard is to use the simpler form (no "s"); British spelling prefers the "s". But this has not always been the case. This fascinating [graph](#) shows how the word *toward* has grown in popularity in US English over the

past two centuries (in contrast, this [graph](#) shows *towards* continuing strong in British English).

#### Canadian Style

Canadian usage, of course, is a hybrid of British and US preferences. According to the *Canadian Oxford Dictionary*, the preferred Canadian style uses "forward" and "toward," but "backwards" and "afterwards".

**Example A:** *Sarah ran toward the scene.*

**Example B:** *Sarah ran forward.*

**Example C:** *She stumbled backwards.*

**Example D:** *Afterwards, she couldn't remember why she'd done it.*

#### Foreword versus Forward

Note that "forward" should never be substituted for "foreword," that introductory section to a book. Although "forward" can be used as a noun, it's a sports reference and not a part of a book. Similarly, you'd find an "afterword" in a book (not an "afterward").

**Example E:** *Sarah wrote the foreword to her colleague's book.*

**Example F:** *Sarah wrote the afterword afterwards.* Note that here, the "afterword" is what she wrote; "afterwards," an adverb, describes how (when) she wrote it.

A final caution: colloquial language often confuses these words ending in "–ward," and it's easy for unintended errors to slip in. Before submitting a manuscript, paper, or other written work, a quick "Find/Replace" action will ensure you make all usage consistent..

*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

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

Wanda Waterman

### The Short Films of the Students of the Vancouver Film School



*You would be hard pressed these days to find a major movie release that does not have a VFS connection ...*

- Marty Hasselbach, Managing Director at Vancouver Film School

What do *The Avengers*, *Iron Man 3*, *The Dark Knight Rises*, *Monsters University*, *District 9*, *Forrest Gump*, *The Vampire Diaries*, *Elysium*, and countless other popular films and television series have in common? Graduates of the Vancouver Film School (VFS) have been an integral part of the production of each.

But that's neither here nor there. The Mindful Bard's agenda doesn't include drawing attention to blockbusters; even if on a rare occasion a commercial hit fits the bard criteria, I figure that it has enough publicity already. I mention the conventional attainments just to point out the School's success as a creative incubation chamber. But this article is about the dynamic selection of short films produced and made freely available online by VFS students.

It's as if a small group of Canadians actually noticed the profound global significance of the Canadian perspective as manifested in our short films. It's as if someone said, "Hey, we could nurture this perspective, train it, exploit it, and use it to rule the world, making this planet a peaceful haven where everyone apologizes too much and all the men wear bathing trunks that are too small."

That's not as scary as it sounds, unless you're zealously amoral or you completely reject that special brand of self-righteousness that tends to plague us Canucks. And it's not even so very far-fetched; our history has proven that ingenious short films, on television and in public schools on Friday afternoons, are among the most effective ways of cultivating a community of shared values.

Thus, many of these short films are morality tales—some more Chaucerian than others. You'll also find short hero tales and recreations of that poignant and peculiarly Canadian aesthetic solitude that's behind all the creativity we keep generating for the good of Hollywood, Nashville, and New York.

Among these film shorts you'll find brainteasers and mindless escapes, transcendences and rude awakenings, ethical dilemmas and restorers of faith. They prove that, low art form that it still is to some degree, film can fulfill Jacques Maritain's dictum that art should be rational, meaningful, and delightful.

My sense has always been that the Canadian artist, high art or low, is like a prophet on the mountain. Lacking the distractions, the competitiveness, and the hectic pace of life that often plague our southern neighbors, yet, having access to all the amazing stimuli that that rich culture produces, we have a unique opportunity to deliver high quality arts and entertainment for their distribution machinery. (Sure, it looks like they're getting all the credit, but does a true Canadian even care about the spotlight? Our names are in the credits and we're being paid. As long as we get to keep making art, it's all good.)

Yes, the contributions of VFS alumni to lucrative commercial productions often eclipse the truly brilliant original works we see here. But, sadly, that seems to be the cost of keeping this school great: giving students the freedom and the resources to produce a broad spectrum of work including those well-crafted films that we love—the films that don't just delight but also inform, enlighten, and exhort.

I highly recommend making a pot of green tea, opening their official [YouTube channel](#), picking a playlist, and letting the shorts roll. If you want your children to develop a more sophisticated aesthetic than can be fostered by *My Little Pony* (which incidentally also employs VFS alumni), pick out some cartoons for them to watch, too.

I personally have shown the animated shorts to children in the USA, Canada, and Tunisia, much to their delight. Because many of the animations are wordless, they're accessible to children of all languages.

The short films of the students of the Vancouver Film School manifest eight of the Mindful Bard's [criteria](#) for films well worth seeing: they are authentic, original, and delightful; they pose and admirably respond to questions that have a direct bearing on my view of existence; they stimulate my mind; they provide respite from a sick and cruel world, a respite enabling me to renew myself for a return to mindful artistic endeavor; they are about attainment of the true self; they inspire an awareness of the sanctity of creation; they display an engagement with and compassionate response to suffering; and they make me appreciate that life is a complex and rare phenomena, making living a unique opportunity.

## INTERNATIONAL NEWS DESK



### At Home: Canada Hopes to Double International Students.

The federal government recently announced a plan to attempt to double the number of international students attending Canadian post-secondary institutions by 2022. The *Globe and Mail* [reports](#) that International Trade Minister Ed Fast announced the plan on January 13, and that this doubling would mean that Canada would be hosting 450,000 international students.

Some critics are concerned that many universities simply do not have the capacity to educate this many foreign students while maintaining room for domestic students, especially with no new funding being directed toward the universities which will be have to educate all of these additional students.

### Around the World: Police Watch Over Examinations in Egypt

Exams can be nerve-wracking for students at the best of times, but how much worse would it be if you lived in Egypt and had the police overseeing your examination? The *University World News* is [reporting](#) that, due to the massive unrest currently in Egypt, the "military-backed authorities have ordered police deployment on campuses to maintain order during the mid-year examinations that run until late January." Some students there have been protesting the ousting of former president Mohamed Morsi, with some of these protests turning to violence.

This police presence overturns a previous injunction by Egyptian courts on police presence on university grounds.

## Gregor's Bed

## Wanda Waterman

### Fusion Diffusion and Dazed Confusion from a Classical Wunderkind



**Album:** *Illusions*

**Artist:** Ibrahim Maalouf

*Consécration de la classe du virtuose franco-libanais . . .  
synthèse du voyage intérieur et de l'élan vers les sommets du  
jazz.*

*-[So Jazz](#), Novembre 2012*

From the first sweetly thoughtful tones of the title track, *Illusions* manages to express a complex range of concepts with a mountain of music and a handful of words.

As seen recently in the music of Manteca, or from the group Edward Sharpe and the Magnetic Zeroes, there's a trend

happening. A trend that fits nicely with the current romanticism, bowing to the music of the sixties, harking back to what was making waves back then, but also borrowing the salient qualities of then lesser known subgenres like electronic jazz and Arabic modes. And Captain Beefheart, of course.

And as singular a contribution as he's made to the classical music world, Maalouf's unique gift lies in his ability to meld differing genres. Yes, this has been done ad infinitum, but much of musical syncretism has lead self-indulgent dead ends. Maalouf has blended traditional jazz, classical, and Arabic elements into a kind of jazz fusion that's somewhat at odds with all three but is both intellectually engaging and fun.

The Beirut-born and now Paris-based Maalouf comes from a very talented musical (as well as literary) family and studied classical trumpet under his renowned father, trumpeter Nassim Maalouf, who added Arab repertoire, *maqams* (traditional modes), and improvisation to the classical, baroque, and modern styles he'd taught his son.

Ibrahim built up a distinguished career as a classical trumpeter before opening his jazz umbrella to cover any genres that struck his fancy. His collaborations with artists like Sting and Amadaou and Maryam gave him a reputation as a versatile and original talent, opening the door to the production of three critically acclaimed albums as well as some formidable film soundtracks. Maalouf has in the meanwhile become a multi-instrumentalist, allowing him to apply his unique aesthetic to a broad spectrum of the sound.

One unique feature of his playing is his use of the microtones (smaller than a half-tone). Part of the challenge of playing Arabic music on the trumpet was that the conventional trumpet lacked the capacity to play microtones--which are a part of Arabic music but not practiced by many Arabic trumpeters in the west, with the exception of Amir ElSaffar. Microtones are also essential to blues--the famous "flattened" third, created by pulling on a guitar string with the left hand, is a kind of microtone because it emerges at a slightly lower pitch than a normal tone. The Northumbrian smallpipes, a kind of Scottish bagpipe, also has the ability to play these tones. Ibrahim's father, Nassim, is credited with having invented the "quarter-tone trumpet" that makes playing microtones possible.

You'll also hear the kind of fusion jazz high school bands love to play--rich, brazen, loud, layered, boisterous, and danceable, like the theme of *Hawaii Five-0*--and the perfect escape for those intellectually curious adolescents bent on doing something special with their lives.

The track titles, like "Conspiracy Generation" and "If You Wanna Be a Woman" reflect this kind of youthful nerdiness while paying tribute to the history of cool. In addition to Maalouf's phenomenal trumpet playing you'll



find lots of spirited psychedelic guitar here—especially in the final track, “Illusion” (not to be confused with the title track, “Illusions”). And there’s evidence for an abiding love for the James Brown school of heavy funk soul.

“Conspiracy Generation” sounds like the opener to a sixties spy thriller; intense, and driven by rapid drums and a glorious trumpet racing through an exciting—and slightly menacing—motif.

In “Nomade Slang” we hear the call-and-response pattern common to much of Arab and sub-Saharan African music.

“Busy” begs the question: “are you busy or are you waiting for someone who is too busy for you?” The slow, tender sadness of the piece would suggest the latter. The trumpet’s small soft sobs are perplexed and full of longing.

“If You Wanna Be a Woman” is filled with frenetic but very orderly motifs and runs in a glorious brass polyphony, and the brief episodes of restrained trumpet staccato are more expressive than words.

“True Sorry” is a brilliant Hendrix hard rock reference to the worldview presented in this album, a kind of commentary on this generation and the internal ills that make it weak.

Yes, accomplished geniuses of Maalouf’s calibre can’t help but arouse our envy, but isn’t it just a bit harder to be jealous of them when they let loose and have fun?

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.

## Click of the Wrist

## Hawaii Dreaming

**Late January can be depressing; it’s cold, it’s bleak, and there’s a whole lot of winter left. This makes it a great time to look back in history to January 18, 1778, when Captain Cook landed where we all wish we were right now: Hawaii. Let’s take a quick armchair vacation to the Rainbow State:**

### Life’s a Beach

You may not be able to do your homework on the beach—but doing it in front of a live beach cam is the next best thing. To further the illusion, listen to Hawaiian radio live [online](#). Thank modern technology for the virtual relief from cold weather and snowy streets!

### The Story of Hula

If you think hula is just entertainment for visitors to the Islands, think again. This NPR “All Things Considered” segment explores just a little of the rich heritage bound up in hula dance.

### Back to School

Want a deeper understanding of “Hawaiian history, language and cultural practices”? Kamehameha Schools’ Distance Learning program offers online courses for adult enrichment. Courses are either free or inexpensive (\$25) and most include elements of family involvement—in keeping with the Hawaiian tradition of *ohana*.







## The Reality of Routine

During the break between Christmas and New Year's, I goofed off. Our long-awaited Boxing Day trip to our son's cabin on the shore of Lesser Slave Lake was scuttled.

On Christmas Eve, Roy felt sick, or at least, not well. He was lucky enough to slip into the walk-in clinic and find it deserted. A quick examination showed no infection, but there was a collection of fluid in each inner ear. A sample bottle of nasal spray was to be the answer; along with the warning that it could take weeks to clear. Uh, that's not good when you hear constant humming and your balance is off. A few rounds of puking the night of the twenty-fifth had us reconsidering joining the kids. The atrocious weather sealed the deal.

Being housebound in what felt like an old-fashioned blizzard from my youth, we vegged. Roy actually found relief in some home remedies I found on the Internet. Still he spent hours lying in bed because when you're prone the dizziness is masked and manageable.

As for me, one day I never got out of my pyjamas. I read the magazines that were piling up around the house. (I no longer save them thinking I'm going to refer to them again. I rip out the odd article instead. The intact ones are taken to the doctor's office, nail and hair salons I frequent.) I also read *Before I Wake*, a Canadian bestseller, in a couple of days. So much better than reading in spurts and losing the storyline between stolen moments.

I watched several TV movies, many of questionable quality. I even watched the 1955 *East of Eden* starring James Dean. Talk about going back in time. In the month preceding Christmas I started a list of all the holiday movies available to us through our satellite package and regular peasant TV. It was a mind-numbing sixty-seven and I probably missed listing some.

I also put together an 11 x 37 inch jigsaw puzzle. It took two or three days of unblinking focus but I did it. Did you know it's impossible to worry and do a puzzle at the same time?

My time was not totally wasted. I started working page by page through a manual for my MacBook Pro and scratching the surface of its potential. I began a skincare regime with my new Clarisonic cleansing thingamajig. You won't believe my lovely skin. I cleared a path to the treadmill and powered it up! Organizing a drawer in the bathroom vanity felt good until I realized we have enough Band-Aids to patch up everyone in Andrew. I even worked on Babas and Borshch stuff though I really must keep it from overtaking my life again this year. Donating surplus Christmas décor made me smile.

Now I just need time to organize my jewelry making supplies and dream of an upcoming trip before the reality of routine comes rushing back, from where I sit.

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

## Seize the Day, One Photo at a Time

Barbara Lehtiniemi



When did I lose control of my life? It happened subtly. Perhaps it was the overwhelming busyness of life—work and family obligations coupled with ongoing education and volunteer commitments. Somewhere along the way, my life began to run me. Opportunities got deferred to some magic future time when I wouldn't be so busy. That time never arrived. The problem came to my attention with my repeated use of the phrase "some time." As in, "that would be interesting to do, some time." Some time, of course, never arrived and opportunities were lost.

Once I realized this, I took action. If I caught myself saying "some time," I would answer back, "if not now, when?" This simple phrase, attributed to Hillel the Elder (60 BC - 10 AD) among others, reminded me to give priority to the things I wanted to do now. I didn't want to keep putting the joys of life on the back burner.

In September 2012, an opportunity arrived quietly in our local newspaper. If I had flipped the page, I would have forgotten about it. In his editorial, Steve Warburton wrote about his daily photo project. Inspired by the late filmmaker Jamie Livingston, who had taken a photo a day for over 20 years, Warburton began his own project in 2008 by taking one photo each day. He challenged his readers to begin their own photo-a-day project. "What a brilliant idea," I thought. "I'm going to do this!" And I did. Before turning the page of the paper, I grabbed my camera and took a photo of the editor's column. That photo became my first photo of the day.

I didn't have any grand expectations for the project. I thought it would be fun and would help me remember to take my camera with me wherever I went. The only rules for the project were that each photo had to be taken by me, or of me; the content of the photos was my choice. I decided each daily photo would represent something of note that happened that day—an event or a sight that distinguished that day from all others. Since most days I can't be sure of which photo will be THE photo, I often end up with dozens of potential candidates.

Each morning, I select which of the previous day's photos will be photo-of-the-day. From the beginning, I posted my daily photos on Facebook along with a short description. Since many of my family and friends live at a distance, the photos became a fun way of keeping people up to date. When I stopped posting them for a few weeks, I got complaints—people missed them.

At the beginning of 2013, I began posting my photos on [365project.org](http://365project.org). Tens of thousands of people worldwide use this free site daily, each doing their own photo-a-day project. It's a community of photographers who support each other in their quest to become better photographers, and who share ideas and techniques.

The project has prompted me to become more observant. I am more aware of the rhythms of the seasons and life unfolding around me. I keep an eye out for the colourful, unusual, or whimsical shot. I stretch my imagination. Along the way, I became a better photographer. I relied less on the camera's automatic settings and improved my skill with the manual ones. I developed a keener eye and practiced more thoughtful composition. The project has imposed a daily discipline and prompted greater creativity—important attributes for a student to have.

There have been unexpected but rewarding benefits. Two of my photos have been published in two different newspapers. One photo of a Hungarian Partridge appears on Bird Studies Canada's 2014 calendar. A shot of my neighbour's snow-covered barn graced their Christmas cards last year. Several photos have appeared in *The Voice*. The photos I take also double as a pictorial journal—a visual diary of what I did that day.

Sixteen months ago, instead of thinking a good idea would be good "some time," I seized the day. I acted on an opportunity, stepped boldly, and brought joy to my life. Today marks my 500th photo in this project.

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

## DID YOU KNOW?

## Students Like Call Centres



Recently in the [Athabasca Advocate](#), the Graduate Students' Union President, Amanda Nielsen, said that "students view the call centre as a positive step to restructure the university". Already used in the business school, the call centre would eliminate any direct means of contact students have with tutors.

Calls that require academic experts would have to be referred to them, and these experts would then contact you within a 48 hour window thereafter to answer the question that stopped your studies. According to Ms. Nielsen, restructuring the university in this way is a positive step because it would allow the university to save money, as questions about "university policies, like getting transcripts, you don't need to pay a faculty member with a higher salary to answer it when you have a call centre handling it." However, AU currently maintains an information centre to handle such questions from 8:00am to 5:00pm Monday to Friday and there are no indications that it is staffed by faculty.

There are currently no plans to move graduate studies to a call centre model.



## Comic

Wanda Waterman

# CHAZZ BRAVADO IN: PROTESTING THE MISS AMERICA PAGEANT



Oh, yes, I agree that this is bondage for women.

Oh, baby, the rack on that blonde . . . !

And the message it sends is utterly wrong!



(Whoa! I'd build a mountain shrine to those legs!)

You're all so much more than just bodies to be paraded across a stage. AH-OOGA! Bring some o' that over here!



OOPS! HEH, HEH . . .

WRITTEN BY 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](mailto:ausu@ausu.org).



# CLASSIFIEDS

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Classifieds are free for AU students! Contact [voice@voicemagazine.org](mailto:voice@voicemagazine.org) for more information.

## THE VOICE

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