

# THE VOICE

## MAGAZINE

Vol 22 Issue 07 2014-02-14

### In Conversation

Suzie LeBlanc, Part II

### Dear Lover

Writing Valentine's Messages

### Surgery Prep

Natural Steps

*Plus:*

*From Where I Sit  
Primal Numbers  
and much more!*



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# LETTERS TO THE EDITOR



My four year old daughter found one more thing to love in the AUSU planner that you missed. Each month, there's a picture beside the space left for a task list. The new AUSU logo figures are hidden in almost every picture. (Almost. Pretty sure the center guy's not in March, September, or November) My daughter and I had a fun few minutes finding them all.

Janice M.

*Psst.. check the background in November. I think you're right about the other two though. -Karl*

**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



## Tradition Defied

Ever look into the origins of modern Valentine's day? It's kind of unusual in the cavalcade of misinformation and mistakes that were made which lead us to decide upon the notion of February 14<sup>th</sup> being the day to celebrate romantic love. To start with, there's almost nothing known about an actual "Saint Valentine". There were a number of Christian martyrs named Valentine back in the time of the Romans, and at least three of them were declared saints, with one of them buried on the Via Flaminia (a roman road) on February 14. What's more, these saints were more associated with sacrifice (being martyrs) than romantic love.

But in 1392, Chaucer wrote of birds coming back to find their mate on "seynt Volantynus" day, which many readers assume to be the same February 14<sup>th</sup> that the traditional "Feast of St. Valentines" had been held on. However, it's been pointed out that Chaucer was writing this poem to honour the first anniversary of King Richard II of England's marriage to Anne of Bohemia, which happened on May 2, that May 3<sup>rd</sup> is a celebration in the liturgical calendar of Valentine of Genoa, and that finally, it's far more likely for birds to be seeking their mates in early May than early February, especially in colder climes such as England.

All of these mistakes, however, have come together to form what we consider to be the celebration of romantic love known as Valentine's Day. So it seems that, sometimes, several wrongs can make a right. It's with that thought that I'm happy to bring you the February 14<sup>th</sup> edition of *The Voice Magazine*. In it you'll find a number of non-traditional explorations of Valentine's day, with From Where I Sit looking at some of the other things of importance that happen on February 14<sup>th</sup>, Gregor's Bed reviewing some shorts that look at the darker side of romantic love, and even our Click of the Wrist looks at the workings of the heart in a way you might not expect for Valentine's Day. Traditionalists, however, will probably be better served checking out this weeks' The Writer's Toolbox.

There's also a number of articles for those of us who can't be bothered with Valentine's day one way or the other. Personally, I'm quite fond of the second part of Barbara Lehtiniemi's "Learning with Lynda" article for giving us a quick look at how Lynda might be useful beyond computer and software training. And if you have a surgery coming up, you have my condolences. But you also have our Health Matters column from Katie D'Souza to give you some very useful tips on how to best prepare for the surgery so that all you have to worry about afterward is getting better. But those are just two of the many other things in this week's Voice.

One of the things I don't have in this issue that I wanted to get was coverage of the AUSU election candidates. So far, responses in the forums have been slow, and it seems some candidates have been withdrawing as the election proceeds. So remember readers, on February 19-22 we will be picking nine people to represent us for the next two years. They will be speaking for you, so if you want to make sure they're saying the right things, now is the time to get into the forums and ask them your questions as you make your decisions. Who knows what they might say on your behalf otherwise?

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

## In Conversation with Suzie LeBlanc, Part I

Wanda Waterman



"LeBlanc has a superb ability to take the wonderfully pure sound she can make, over which she has consummate control, and wrap it in something luscious and special before giving it to you."

- Sydney Morning Herald

*Suzie LeBlanc is an internationally acclaimed Canadian soprano. Her most recent project was the album I Am in Need of Music, a group of 11 songs whose settings she commissioned from six prominent Canadian composers and whose lyrics were based on the poems of Elizabeth Bishop, a new England poet who spent her formative years in Canada's Maritime provinces (read Voice review [here](#)). In order to prepare to sing these poems for the album, as well as for sheer love of Bishop's poetry, Suzie and artist Linda Rae Dornan retraced the steps of a hike Bishop took through Newfoundland in 1932 (this is documented in the video "Walking with EB"). Recently she took the time to answer Wanda Waterman's questions about her influences, adventures, and why she loves Elizabeth Bishop's poems. (Read the first part of this interview [here](#).)*

### Why Elizabeth Bishop?

Bishop was one of the greatest poets of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. What attracted me to her writing was the way she saw and described things. She saw beyond the accepted view of things, even beyond knowledge (of which she had plenty). She was fond of anything that could alter her perspective. Her first collection of poetry is called "North and South." She'd lived in both hemispheres during her life and was fascinated by these poles. She expanded my view of things and made me rethink the meaning of "place." Reading Bishop, you learn to see small things— to soar like an eagle and view the large picture.

The first Bishop poem I read was this:

The Map (an excerpt)

Land lies in water; it is shadowed green.  
Shadows, or are they shallows, at its edges  
showing the line of long sea-weeded ledges  
where weeds hang to the simple blue from green.  
Or does the land lean down to lift the sea from under,  
drawing it unperturbed around itself?  
Along the fine tan sandy shelf  
is the land tugging at the sea from under?

I loved the line, "Or does the land lean down to lift the sea from under." I wanted to read more Bishop and learn to see like her.



## Hiking Newfoundland

We were following Bishop's diary from Spread Eagle to Norman's Cove. She had taken the back road, and so did we. The road was one bog after another. We were hauling trees to make a path in the deep mud. Bishop mentioned crossing a bridge in her diary. When we arrived at the river, the bridge was long gone and we had to get across with our camera equipment. The water was shallow but the rocks were extremely slippery!

Another unexpected event was an impromptu concert by Elvis Presley. We went on a boat tour in Dildo and, after the tour the captain of the boat gave a short performance of his excellent Elvis impersonation, costume and everything. It was a highlight and Linda managed to get the camera out in time for the show. It's on the DVD "Walking with EB."

## Literary Newfoundlanders

One man had tears when we read him parts of Bishop's diary where she described his aunt who had cancer of the face. It wasn't the kindest of descriptions but he was touched to find a memory of his aunt in her writing.

The people we met at B & B's were intrigued by our trip and many of them really enjoyed reading Bishop with us. Newfoundland is a very literary place. Our first hosts, after reading part of "The Moose," said that reading poetry in the morning was much better than watching the news on the television and that they were going to do this every morning from now on.

I am not sure that I was more connected to Bishop after the trip, but I was certainly more connected to myself, and to my surroundings. I had time to read her prose and her letters, not just her poems, which meant that my knowledge of her was broadening. I like to think of it as being able to see a larger map of the area I was working in. Her spirit and her sense of humour were palpable throughout the whole trip; like when Elvis appeared!

*(to be concluded next week)*

## DID YOU KNOW?



## AUSU Health Care Plan

During the Election, AUSU will be holding a vote to approve the implementation of a new Health Care Plan. This plan will cost \$325 per year, however students can opt out of the plan before the fees are applied. Those who do not, however, will receive benefits of up to \$500 in dental (including preventative work), \$300 in physician care (including chiropractors, naturopaths, and physiotherapists), 80% coverage of prescription drugs, and up to \$2000 coverage of private tutorial service if they've been hospitalized, and this coverage is in addition to any other plans they might already have.

However, before these benefits can be offered, students need to vote for the plan alongside the AUSU Election from Feb 19-22. Even if you do not want the plan personally, your vote could enable some other student who needs it to take advantage of it.



## Easy-Peasy

When most people (except perhaps absent-minded husbands) hear the words February 14, like Pavlov's dogs, they think of Valentine's Day. The images conjured up include heart-shaped boxes of chocolate, bouquets of red roses, tiny jewel boxes and over-sized, over-priced, glittery greeting cards.

How the guy reacts to these calls to action depends on where on the relationship timeline (love at first sight versus old married couple) they fall. Any man worth his salt will damn well see to it that he buys at least one out of the four markers of affection. If he knows what's good for him.

Naturally, I say this with tongue firmly planted in cheek. The pressure to express one's love in a retail way is relentless and (almost) as intensely directed at females. If and how much money is thrown at the cause will depend on the couple and their circumstances. But having the annual nudge to think about our relationships and how to show our affection can't hurt.

But did you know that February 14<sup>th</sup> is designated for at least four other causes? Most frivolous is Ferris Wheel Day, but I'm not likely to celebrate that one, never having been on one and, sure as hell, never going to try. The intention is to acknowledge the 1893 invention of this amusement park attraction by civil engineer George Washington Gale Ferris, Jr.

Animal lovers may or may not know about Pet Theft Awareness Day. It was designated in the United States in 1988 and seeks to raise understanding of the reality of pet thefts. About two million pets are stolen annually in the States. Preventive measures include pet identification strategies like the implanting of microchips or tattooing. If publicity about this day reminds pet owners to take action then it is worth it. A great deal of grief would be alleviated in the process.

Home-schooling parents in particular are urged to celebrate Read to Your Child Day, but it affords a good reminder to all parents about the critical importance of reading to every child every day. The adoption of the reading habit by everyone regardless of age would enrich the world and might eliminate some problems without any extra measures. Reading levels and illiteracy have been linked to crime stats.

But perhaps the most important reason to pay attention on February 14<sup>th</sup> is Donor Day. The heart symbolism so interwoven with Valentines Day has some relevance here. The altruistic act of donating blood, platelets, marrow, tissue or organs definitely has a heart connection and is a selfless expression of love and generosity. The Saturn Corporation and the United Auto Workers Union started it in the US in 1998. Governmental and non-profit groups use the day to promote blood drives and the signing of donor cards.

From my perspective your day schedules itself: after a trip to the vet clinic, sign your donor card, re-watch the video of you shrieking on the Ferris wheel, and read a bedtime story to your kid before heading out for dinner with your loved one. Easy-peasy, from where I sit.

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

## Health Matters

### Preparing for Surgery Naturally

Katie D'Souza



While natural medicine focuses on healing the body through non-invasive methods, sometimes surgery is unavoidable. What you can control, however, is how you treat your body before surgery. Enhancing your nutrition, mental health, and immunity can have significant implications for your post-op health, including quicker healing times, reduced bruising, and lowered risk of post-surgery complications. In this article we'll look at some ways to help your body prepare so that you're at your healthiest on your surgery date.

#### Think nutrition

Back to the basics, everyone! Impending surgery is a good incentive to do a reality check on your diet. Do you consume the recommended five to seven servings of fruit *and* five to ten servings of vegetables daily? Or do you pass on the lightly dressed salad and settle for a burger and fries? By providing your body with adequate nutrients, you'll give it what it needs to be able to recover from surgery more quickly.

Prior to surgery, you should focus on front-loading certain key nutrients. Vitamin C helps with tissue and collagen repair and also helps prevent infection, so make sure you consume fruit rich in vitamin C (like oranges, apples, and berries). Some surgeons may also recommend additional vitamin C supplementation beginning several weeks before surgery.

Zinc is crucial for strong immunity, which is a factor in the healing process. It can be found in raw pumpkin seeds or organic organ meats; alternately, you can take a multivitamin or zinc supplement containing 15-30 mg zinc.

Protein is also a must for surgery patients. The “building blocks” of protein—called amino acids—are used by the body to make new tissue and muscle, as well as repair damaged tissue. If you're vegetarian or vegan, you'll be happy to know that plant-based proteins are just as effective; see this [Health Matters article](#) for ways to ensure that your plant-based diet contains adequate, whole proteins.

#### Think homeopathics

Another way to prepare your body for surgery is by supplementation with homeopathic medicine. Because homeopathics work on a minute-dose principle, they are routinely used in babies, children, and in situations where using other natural substances would be contra-indicated (ie., before scheduled surgery).

*Arnica* helps with pain relief and reduces the potential for bruising or swelling. The recommended dose is two to three pellets (200 ch.) taken sublingually each day for one week before surgery.

*Bellis perennis* is a homeopathic remedy used to help prepare for surgery involving the trunk, like abdominal surgery or heart surgery; it's not helpful for surgery involving other areas of the body, however (limbs, brain,



etc.). The recommended dose is three pellets (200 ch), taken sublingually each day for one week before surgery.

Finally, *Hypericum perforatum* helps prevent nerve damage and associated nerve pain and trauma during surgery. The recommended dose is three pellets (200 ch.) taken sublingually each day for one week before surgery.

### **Think mind-body connection**

Yes, impending surgery can weigh on your mind. But there are ways to lessen this mental burden without supplementation (which is often contraindicated for surgery patients).

First, engage in meditation. Harvard University's Mind-Body Institute has shown that five minutes of deep, conscious breathing has the ability to “reset” your nervous system, letting the parasympathetic branch of your nervous system—which promotes feelings of relaxation and calms alpha wave production in the brain—take over. If anxiety over surgery is keeping you awake at night, try meditating for a few minutes; you’ll notice your sleep patterns beginning to change for the better.

Second, think practical; prepare for surgery by eliminating possible post-surgery stressors. Wrap up projects at work and inform your employer (or your clients, if you’re self-employed) of your surgeon’s recommendation for duration of recovery before returning to work. Get your time off in place now, and err on the side of caution so you don’t end up forcing your body to jump back before it’s ready. Depending on your health concerns and the estimated post-surgery recovery time frame, you may also want to get some pre-cooked meals in the freezer to ease your post-op burden. If you know you’ll be confined to bed rest—or are concerned that your activity level may be compromised—line up help; ask family members or friends to lend you a hand with meals, cooking, cleaning, babysitting, or whatever else you might need. Knowing you’ve got solid plans in place for adequate post-op care can help put your mind at rest.

### **Watch your supplements**

One last caution: natural supplements are powerful, so make sure that you inform your surgeon of **all** vitamins, supplements, and formulas you’re taking—not just prescription pharmaceuticals. Some supplements or over-the-counter medicines might be contraindicated with drugs you’ll need to take post-surgery. Others might create complications during surgery or during the healing process. For example, supplements like omega-3 fish oil and turmeric (curcumin) have a mild blood-thinning effect; even though they’re otherwise beneficial for health maintenance and disease prevention, you should discontinue their use about one week prior to your scheduled surgery to reduce any risk of complications. When in doubt, ask your surgeon and/or your natural health care provider. Hiding information of this nature can be detrimental to your health and recovery.

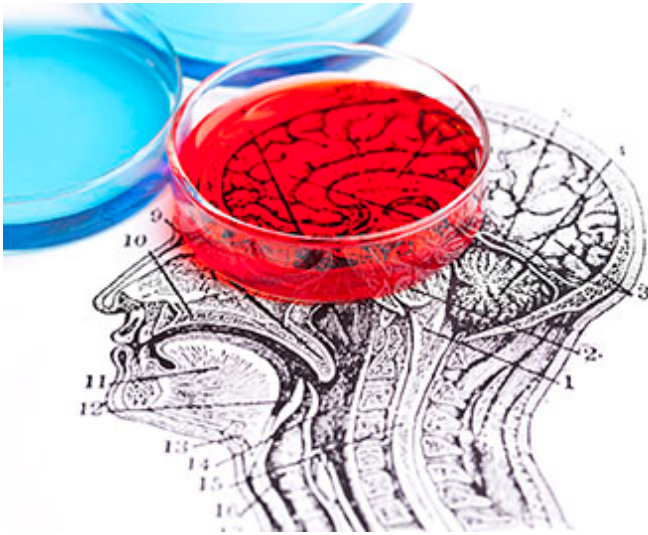
Impending surgery can be stressful, but preparing yourself physically, emotionally, and practically will increase the likelihood that it will all go well and that you will have what you need to bounce back more quickly after surgery. In the next installment of this two-part series, we’ll look at natural ways to help you heal better after your surgery has been completed.

*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

S.D. Livingston



### Marius the Giraffe

If there's a headline sure to tug at heartstrings, it's this one: Zoo Kills Young Giraffe, Feeds it to Lions. That's the story of what happened to Marius, a healthy young male giraffe at the Copenhagen Zoo. The zoo then invited visitors to watch as Marius was dissected and fed to the lions. Ready to cue the moral outrage? Let's look at the facts behind the headline first—and the hypocrisy behind our outrage.

In a perfect world, there'd be no need for zoos. Every animal, from grizzly bears to bowerbirds, would have plenty of food, a healthy habitat, and no risk of death from predatory humans. But it's not a perfect world, and we've polluted, bulldozed, and hunted our way across the planet, pushing countless forms of animal life into a precarious survival, if not outright extinction.

Until we find the will and the ways to undo some of that damage, modern zoos serve a purpose. *Zoo Revolution*, a CBC Doc Zone [episode](#), does a great job of looking at the pros and cons of zoos and is well worth watching.

To start, zoos educate the public and raise awareness about hundreds of species, including the need to protect natural habitats (the Toronto Zoo has 20 current habitat-protection [projects](#) in Canada and around the world). Some zoos take in animals, including large predators like polar bears, that have been injured in the wild. And zoo breeding programs can help ensure the healthy survival of many species, including those at risk.

That's where animals like Marius come in. As *Zoo Revolution* explains, zoos "rarely take animals from the wild anymore." Instead, the lions and chimps you see in a reputable zoo have been bred in captivity—part of a huge database of animals whose lineage is closely recorded.

To prevent inbreeding, those animals are often transferred to other zoos when it's time to mate. But that begets another problem: what happens when the local gene pool is full?

As this CBC [article](#) reports, that's what happened at the Copenhagen Zoo. As a member of the European Association of Zoos and Aquaria, the zoo followed EAZA's recommendation to "put down Marius because there already were a lot of giraffes with similar genes in the organization's breeding program."

Which might have you wondering: why would a zoo deliberately breed an animal under those conditions? The short answer is, they didn't. Nature simply took its course.

So why not sterilize certain animals? Because contraceptives or castration “could have unwanted side effects on their internal organs, and the [Copenhagen] zoo regards parental care as important.”

Surely, then, Marius could have been saved by sending him to another zoo. Well, not so fast. Should the zoo or sanctuary be accredited? Perhaps a private facility? Who would make sure he was being well looked after?

All those questions (and more) had to be considered. One zoo that offered to take Marius isn’t a member of EAZA and “didn’t want to comply with the same high standards.” A wildlife park, which is an EAZA member, already houses Marius’s older brother, meaning that the same genetic quandry could arise for the next generation of young giraffes there.

The issue, then, isn’t black and white. There are valid reasons why a healthy young animal like Marius would be euthanized in a zoo setting.

Instead, the real question is why we feel outrage over the humane killing of one healthy animal but happily ignore the slaughter (and cruel treatment) of billions of other healthy animals like pigs and cows.

Is it because giraffes have big, soft eyes and long lashes? So do cows. Is it because giraffes are intelligent? Maybe so, but as this [NBC article](#) reminds us, pigs are the “smartest [and] cleanest domestic animals known,” and master certain tasks “as quickly as chimpanzees.”

Perhaps it’s because we use domestic animals as a food source and can justify killing them because it serves a purpose. But that argument doesn’t hold much weight when we remember that giraffes are a natural food source for several predators, including lions and hyenas. Marius became a very useful part of the food chain for the zoo’s lions, just as pigs, cows, and chickens serve a purpose for people who choose to eat them or buy leather shoes and wallets.

Is there something genuinely sad about the death of a healthy young animal, even when we know it was a painstaking decision? Of course there is, and it’s heartening to see that so many people care about the treatment of animals in zoos.

But compassion shouldn’t be reserved for occasional headlines and cute giraffes. Not when there are so many ways to make a small but important difference every day—even if it’s just a better understanding of the facts.

[World Wildlife Fund](#)

[World Association of Zoos and Aquariums](#)

[Ducks Unlimited Canada](#)

[In the Belly of the Beast](#) (Caution! This *Rolling Stone* article contains violence and disturbing content)

*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.*

## Writer's Toolbox

Christina M. Frey



### Dear Lover

Chocolates? Check. Sentimental card? Check. Personal note slipped into the card, under your partner's pillow, or next to the coffeemaker? Uh—wait, what?

The love letter has become a thing of the past, but romantic writing is nowhere near dead. In fact, no longer limited to Hallmark cards, romantic comedies, and Harlequin novels, romantic writing and love scenes are cropping up in genres from young adult to mystery to thriller to literary fiction. This week's Toolbox examines some general principles of good romance writing and offers tips on how to create your own little piece of romantic literature—to be seen by his or her eyes only.

### Remember your audience

Authors are constantly reminded to remember their audience, and that's especially true when it comes to romantic imagery. What's the audience's comfort zone (or crack-up zone)? How does that romantic scene fit with the genre and the story? When you're writing a love letter, always keep in mind that your audience is someone you know and love. You're writing to show that person how much he or she means to you. Don't write the letter that's right for a vast audience or for the typical moviegoer—write the letter that's right for your partner.

### Follow your characters

Even during love scenes, characters need to stay true to their natures. Similarly, your love letter should reflect your relationship chemistry. What makes you as a couple tick? What's your "thing"? Don't try too hard to be a Hallmark card; don't stress out if gushy isn't characteristic of your relationship. Stay in character and you'll create something that's much more heartfelt and genuine.

### Show how you feel

One romance writer offers this tip: "When writing your love scenes . . . [focus on] the emotions of your characters. When it comes to love, it's all about what your characters are feeling." Ditto with love letters, though with one twist—you *are* one of the characters. Don't be afraid to show how you feel.

### Go with the flow

Scared that when you try to tap into emotion you'll cross the line into cheesy? One romance author advises writers to "get rid of your inner judgment . . . once you've got those words you can go back and edit them and polish them." While you're not necessarily going to go back and polish, it's great advice for love letter writers. Suspend your self-critic and write from the heart.

Reading this after the 14th? The sentiment doesn't need to be packed away with the heart decorations and red ribbons on February 15. Take the opportunity to write your partner a love letter outside of the Valentine's season. You might find the everyday offers a lot less performance anxiety—and a lot more inspiration.

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

## INTERNATIONAL NEWS DESK



### At Home: Health Premiums vs. International Students

The Montreal Gazette has a story out about how international students in Quebec are being forced to choose between continuing their education in Canada or not due to the high health premiums they are charged. Single coverage is currently \$951/yr, an increase of over 60% since 2009. For those international students with dependants, it's even worse, as health care costs can range from \$2,916 for a single dependant, up to 5,547 for a family of three or more.

Jonathan Mooney, president of the Post-Graduate Students' Society at McGill has said, "We have had students come to us and say they can't stay because of the cost of health insurance." Mooney is lobbying to have international students in the province covered under provincial medicare, something already done in BC, Alberta, and Manitoba.

### Around the World: UK Suspends ETS Testing for TOEFL and TOEIC

TOEFL, or Test of English as a Foreign Language, and TOEIC, or Test of English for International Communication, are the two most common and widely respected tests used to determine if an immigrant or international student has a sufficient command of the English language to take courses at english speaking universities. ETS, or Educational Testing Services, Inc, is a company that handles a large amount of training for, and administration of these tests.

Recently, however, a BBC investigation revealed that these tests are subject to widespread cheating, with even "fake sitters" being used at one test centre in the UK. The government, in response, has suspended all ETS administrated testing until a full investigation can be completed. ETS has denied any problems with their methods, saying it maintains "one of the most thorough test security protocols in the world and works closely with in-country representatives to monitor all aspects of test delivery."

The problem, however, is so open that the BBC program was able to show a website for a student education agency that told an undercover reporter they were able to deliver a "guaranteed pass" on the TOEIC in that specific centre. This is in spite of the numerous spelling or grammatical errors on their site, including in their "Directors Massage".



## More Learning From Lynda Inspiration and Instruction

Barbara Lehtiniemi



I once worked for a manager who encouraged her staff to learn one new thing every day. So strongly did she feel about this that she declared once we had learned something new we could go home early. None of us were ever brave enough to test her sincerity on that. We found it easier to follow her other maxim that said there would be no thinking on Fridays. There seldom was.

If I endeavour to learn one new thing each day (excepting Fridays, naturally), I will gain over 300 new skills or pieces of knowledge in a year. With the internet, there's no shortage of learning opportunities but the value varies widely. In-person seminars and conferences often offer quality, but with a daunting investment of time and money.

At the intersection of value and quality you might find lynda.com. Lynda.com is the video training website offered by the AU Students' Union. Students registered in at least one AU undergraduate course for credit can register to access this service free through the [AUSU website](#). It's worthwhile to register and browse through the course list: you can find both information and inspiration from among over 2000 offerings.

There really is a Lynda at lynda.com. The service was founded by Lynda Weinman and her husband Bruce Heavin. The site was initially conceived to supplement and support in-class instruction on web design, imagery, and photography. Now their training is fully online as a subscription training service, with an expanded video library that includes business and software skills. AUSU is providing access to its members for free; see the details [here](#).

After my initial forays into some light learning, described in last week's [Voice article](#), I continued my educational journey with some meatier fare. I began with "OneNote Essential Training." I have only been using OneNote, Microsoft's note-taking software, for a year so there are big gaps in my knowledge. The course for the 2007 version runs over five hours, so I watched only a couple segments of interest to me on templates and pen mode. I learned two new things in under ten minutes.

For "Time Management Fundamentals," I didn't want to miss a thing so I started at the beginning. This course, like many others, has exercise files that I can download right from the course page. After watching the first few segments I've already learned techniques I can use, as well as the difference between multi-tasking, which many people think they can do, and background-tasking, which is actually possible. With a click this course is added to my playlist so I can quickly access it later.

I'm not planning to do any public speaking soon. Or even ever. But I began watching "Public Speaking Fundamentals" to try to reduce that squirmy feeling I get when thinking about addressing an audience. This will be another course to watch in digestible segments over a week or two. After having watched instructor Laura Bergells describe how and why to define your audience's persona before composing a speech, I feel slightly less uncomfortable with the whole public-speaking thing. I stress *slightly*.

To reward myself for all this earnest learning, I finished my week with "Foundations in Photography: Night and Low Light." Although I take thousands of photos a year, my skills are still under development. I'm counting on instructor Ben Long, who has two dozen photography courses on lynda.com, to help me rely more on my ability and less on the camera's.

Any course I plan to continue I add to my playlist, which I can access from any screen. Additionally, all courses viewed, even briefly, are automatically added to my course history. That makes previously-watched courses easy to find. Lynda knows I don't like wasting time. For details on all lynda.com's features, click on "Support" then "How to use lynda.com" or "FAQs."

I'm trying to make learning with lynda.com part of my daily routine. There are a number of interesting courses I plan to view during the year. I may even get around to "Overcoming Procrastination." What do you want to learn?

If you are an AU student enrolled in an AU undergraduate course for credit, you can access lynda.com and its extensive library of training videos for free. From the AUSU [website](#), click on services, then lynda.com, or click [here](#). Be sure to read the registration instructions carefully.

And remember, if you've learned something new today, you can stop work early.

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

## Click of the Wrist

## Have a Heart

**For the romantic, Valentine's Day is all hearts and flowers and declarations of love; for the cynical, it's a Hallmark holiday and a waste of time and money; and for the lonely, it's sad and depressing. This year, make your Valentine's Day count by getting educated about real heart health and safety—you might be able to save a truly broken heart.**

### Signs of the Times

Because early intervention is key to surviving a heart attack or stroke, every adult should memorize the signs of cardiac emergency. This pamphlet, created by the Heart and Stroke Foundation, explains what to look for and what to do (whether you're experiencing a cardiac event or stroke yourself, or you are alone with a victim).

### Life Saver

When there's an emergency, you know to dial 9-1-1. But emergency personnel may take several minutes to arrive on scene, and time is critical for a victim of cardiac arrest. In fact, for every minute elapsed, the victim's chances of survival go down 10 per cent. The solution is CPR education; locate a class near you, and with just a few hours of your time you can learn life-saving skills. If there are no local classes or you can't fit a formal class into your schedule, [CPR Anytime](#) is a home study course that offers basic CPR instruction.

### Not Just for Kids

Heart health isn't just an issue for adults. The program Jump Rope for Heart—now more than 30 years old—helps kids learn heart-healthy skills while raising money to fund "strategic research" into improving and maintaining kids' cardiac health. The ultimate goal: to ensure the future health of the community and nation.



## Gregor's Bed

Wanda Waterman

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



#### A Happy Anti-Valentine: Six Indie Tales of Love Deflected, Disappointed, and Enlightened

I was trying to be good, really. I set out with the noble, if somewhat conventional goal, of finding a meaningful romantic film to recommend in my column, "The Mindful Bard", for Valentine's Day. I watched about ten minutes into five new romantic movies, most of which are critically acclaimed.

Why only ten minutes each? Not one of them made the cut. Oh, the narcissism. The shallowness. The self-conscious posing. The absence of boundaries, bringing with it an absence of any meaningful connection. The plots that

always involved either married people looking for greener pastures, with no regard to their marriage vows or their children, or "love" relationships that grew out of one-night stands.

So then I thought of looking for films with a twisted take on love—this peculiarity of the human animal to swell with oceanic feelings when attracted to a potential sex partner. But any discussion of this kind of film belonged in *Gregor's Bed*.

#### Lover as Inanimate Object

In no time, I found six film shorts that looked at this crazy little thing called love from a spectrum of crazy little viewpoints. Some interesting themes emerged, perhaps the most fascinating being the idea of the lover as inanimate object filled with longing while helpless to express it, a state familiar to those who've experienced their share of unrequited love.

#### (Warning: Spoiler alert.)

In *Slogan*, the lover is a grinning guy in a cheesy Hawaiian shirt, on a billboard advertising a tropical vacation. The object of his desire is a girl who waits at the bus stop below him every morning. When no one's looking, his eyes follow her (once he even moves closer to see what she's reading). He observes her love life falling apart and tries desperately to leave clues to indicate to her that he's "real." She finally understands and that tropical vacation becomes the context of their happily-ever-after.

Continuing the theme of the inanimate lover, in the Italian *Eros e Thanatos*, an anatomy class skeleton named Antonio Femore falls in love with a student. Alone at night, he recites the most beautiful ode to love and loneliness, but eventually pulls himself up and thinks of a way to make contact with the girl. In the end, his desire shows itself for what it is: the sublimation of a frustrated libido that really wants nothing more than a little naughty physical contact with a beautiful love object.

#### Love and Death

*Eros e Thanatos* isn't the only one of these films that deals with love and death, the long slow waltz between the urge to procreate and the reality of human mortality. Another of these shorts, *Carefully Descending*, touches on the same theme of psychic energy being strong enough to cross the threshold from death into life and back again.

A man is haunted by dreams and hallucinations of a beautiful woman he doesn't know. As it turns out, she had known him, having loved him from a distance during the months before her accidental death.

The bizarre, and somewhat disturbing, *Rigor Mortis* also appears to be about death. But on closer inspection is about the tragedy of being married to an otherwise very attractive man who callously forces his wife to play second fiddle to another woman. In this case the other woman is a zombie-like spectre who just hangs around, silent and motionless. Apparently hubby prefers clinging to past memories to entering the rigorous give-and-take—and necessary personal growth—that comes with real relationships.

But even real relationships aren't always firmly rooted enough to hold up in the face of difficult truths. In *Dan Invited Hannah Over for Dinner* the girl is fantasizing wedding bells when she's forced to come up against a hideous spectre. The love inside her, bred from a long, comfortable, seamless sexual relationship with a man whose apartment she's never even seen before now, isn't equal to this challenge to her lifelong habit of shallow affect. In the end, it was never about the love.

### Waking Up

Shallow affect is almost the main character in the enlightening comedy *Blessing in Disguise*, in which we see the self-absorbed recreational sex of modern twenty-somethings for what it really is: an escape from intimacy made possible by a promiscuous culture and a misguided belief in one's own invincibility. It takes an STD to wake the main character to the futile emptiness of her previous lifestyle and compel her to pursue the riches that lie beyond loveless sex.

If indie filmmakers, as I suspect, have their fingers on the pulse of the future (if they are not in fact creating the future as they go), what are we to surmise about the horizons of postmodern love? Perhaps that the pendulum is swinging back to stricter sexual mores. Here's hoping that social change will be informed by the excesses of the past, recognizing the harmful effects of both prudery and license.

*Editor's note: All movies mentioned and the images below can be found on the site <http://indieflix.com>*



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.





Dear  
Barb

Barbara Godin

### Dear Barb:

*I am the youngest in a family of three girls. My father has recently been diagnosed with terminal lung cancer. Our growing up has been dysfunctional for the most part, as my father was physically and verbally abusive to me and my sisters. Fortunately, I have been able to make amends with my father and our relationship has been cordial for the last few years. My sisters have not seen my father for years. Dad has expressed to me that he would like to see my sisters before he passes. Whenever I bring up the subject to my sisters they adamantly refuse to see my dad, claiming they are at peace with their decision. I really think they are going to regret this choice. How can I get them to visit dad before it's too late?*

**Kerry**

Hi Kerry.

You have done all that you can do.

Your sisters are adults; it's up to them whether they want to see your father. You can't make that decision for them. If they say they are at peace, then you have to accept that they are. While you may not agree with their decision, you have to respect it. They may still change their minds, but you can't force that.

As long as your dad is still here, there is hope! Thanks for your question.

**Dear Barb:**

*My mother is driving me crazy!!! I started university in September and my mother won't leave me alone. In fact, I moved into an apartment with a roommate and mom is driving us both crazy. Don't get me wrong I love my mom, but she is so overbearing. She calls me at least three times a day and comes over every other day. She brings home cooked meals for us and wants to take my laundry home to wash.*

*I moved out because I needed my space. How can I stop this without hurting my mom's feelings? I really need to cut the apron strings!! Help!!*

**Nicole.**

Hey Nicole.

Obviously your mother is not ready to cut the apron strings. It's very difficult for some parents to allow their children to grow up. By doing your laundry and cooking for you your mom is still able to take care of you, albeit from a distance. Even though this works for her, it definitely is not working for you. You need to set some boundaries for your mom. Explain to her that you really want to be on your own, which means doing your own cooking and laundry, etc. Perhaps you can make a tentative arrangement to visit on Sundays for dinner, however your mother has to be prepared for the possibility that something may come up and you will not be able to make it every Sunday. She probably just needs the reassurance of knowing that she will still see you and be a part of your life.

You are fortunate to have a loving, caring mother. Thanks for writing.

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.



## Comic

Wanda Waterman

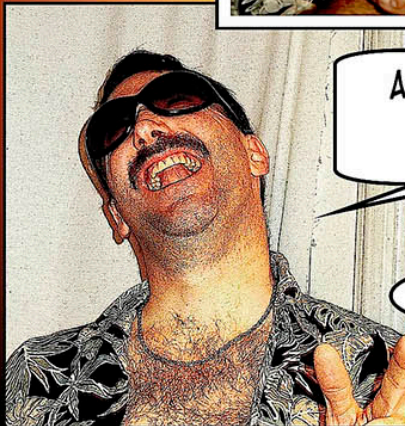
# CHAZZ BRAVADO: on the olympics

Why does Russia have to be so pooppy about gays?

Gay men are a treasure! Why?  
Because they free up more women  
for us real men!



And as for lesbians, well, they just  
haven't MET any real men!



Hey, am I diplomat material or  
what?!



WRITTEN BY WANDA WATERMAN  
WITH INPUT FROM BEN  
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).

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# CLASSIFIEDS

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

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## Free Motorcycle

Free 2006 Kawasaki Ninja ZX-636R Sportbike

It is in excellent condition—100% mechanically.

If interested pls contact: [jacobgreen2001@yahoo.com](mailto:jacobgreen2001@yahoo.com)

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## THE VOICE

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