

# THE VOICE

## MAGAZINE

Vol 22 Issue 28 2014-07-18

### Essay Writing

Tips to Get Started

### A Walrus and a Mop

Sand in Your Phone?

### In Conversation

Michael Gauthier, III

*Plus:*

*From Where I Sit  
Overheard  
and much more!*



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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



## Senatorial Shenanigans

If you haven't already heard or read about it, the RCMP has placed 31 charges against suspended Senator Mike Duffy revolving around his expense claims while he was on the senate, including one charge of accepting a bribe.

However, recently, they also announced that Mr. Nigel Wright, the Prime Minister's chief of staff who gave Mr. Duffy the \$90,000 to repay his senate expenses, is not going to be charged.

This has left a lot of people confused. How is it that receiving \$90,000 from someone as a bribe is illegal, but being the person giving that \$90,000 is allowed to walk away without any charges? Some sites and people have claimed that the reason is that Mr. Wright wouldn't have seen any personal benefit from giving it to Mr. Duffy, and so it wasn't a bribe.

While I'm not a lawyer, this is obviously hogwash. The Prime Minister's Office, Mr. Wright's employer, expected to receive a direct benefit from this, that being the end of the story in the news that was continually embarrassing them. If you work for McDonald's and bribe health inspectors to falsify reports about the local Burger King, then even though you don't receive any direct benefit from that, if you were anybody but Mr. Nigel Wright, you'd still be considered guilty of a crime.

But there remains two reasons why the RCMP may not have charged Mr. Wright. The first is that they see him simply as an intermediary, and are seeking to place the corresponding bribery charge to Mr. Duffy's acceptance of a bribe charge at a higher level in the Prime Minister's Office. Given the RCMP's behavior in the past, however, especially when you consider their actions in 2006 when they released information about an investigation they were starting into Mr. Ralph Goodale—something even they say is not at all their normal protocol and wouldn't be happening again—or how despite it being widely reported that at Ben Harper's 18<sup>th</sup> birthday celebration an 18 year old woman had to be treated for "possible alcohol intoxication" by paramedics, even though the drinking age in Ontario is 19, and that the RCMP did not see any reason to investigate, suggests that thinking the RCMP would try to bring anything against Mr. Harper directly is probably unwarranted.

However, there is still one reason why Mr. Wright may not be charged. In section 121 of our criminal code, the section that deals with bribery of public officials, it says:

**121.** (1) Every one commits an offence who

- (b) having dealings of any kind with the government, directly or indirectly pays a commission or reward to or confers an advantage or benefit of any kind on an employee or official of the government with which the dealings take place, or to any member of the employee's or official's family, or to anyone for the benefit of the employee or official, with respect to those dealings, ***unless the person has the consent in writing of the head of the branch of government with which the dealings take place;*** (emphasis added)

Or in other words, so long as Mr. Wright had the permission of the PM, then this bribe was not illegally offered. Mr. Duffy, on the other hand, would similarly need permission of the PM to legally accept the

bribe, something that it is unlikely Mr. Harper would have been willing to provide. But isn't it fun to learn that government officers can effectively pay off each other to do absolutely anything?

Mr. Duffy's lawyer claims he is innocent of any criminal wrongdoing, and didn't want to participate in the bribery scheme which was "concocted purely for political purposes." It remains to be seen how that line of defense will work against the question of "Then why'd he take the cheque?"

There's plenty of wrongdoing to go around here, but part of what angers me about the whole episode is that all of this is a distraction from the original problem—Mr. Harper appointing Mr. Duffy for a seat in the senate that he should not have had. If Mr. Duffy was honestly a resident of P.E.I., then there never would have been any reason for the cheque and the expense claims would have been legit. That it has been determined they were not suggests that Mr. Duffy could not have been representing P.E.I. from the seat he was appointed to do so in the senate. This means Mr. Harper acted directly against our constitution in appointing him, yet nobody seems to be acknowledging that fact.

It seems like a small issue, and maybe the rule requiring that senators be from specific regions isn't a useful rule, but it exists. So when it's knowingly broken, shouldn't there be consequences? After all, if he can appoint someone from Ontario to represent PEI, then what's to say he can't simply appoint an Albertan to every vacant seat? Yet when our government attempts things that violate our Charter, there is no penalty other than, if they're ever found out, being told, "no, you can't do that, go figure out something else." Personally, I'm terribly frustrated that we have a government which pays absolutely no heed to the rule of law, that hasn't done so since they were first elected, and yet continues to get elected on promises that they've had very little success keeping—when they haven't directly broken them that is (Hello, Mr. Fortier!)

My hope is that people were willing to allow this government considerable slack while they were an embattled minority government. As Canadians, we do seem to love the underdog. But since they received their majority in 2011, we've found that the behaviors which we didn't like but grudgingly allowed during a minority haven't gone away. If anything, looking at the various massive omnibus bills and increasing use of time-allocation to ram bills like the supposed "Fair Elections Act" through parliament, those behaviors have simply increased. So I am hopeful that people who were willing to give them a chance as the underdog before will have reached their limit as to the amount of slack they are willing to give.

So that's my rant for this week on our government. Fortunately, this week's *The Voice Magazine* has a number of things to help take your mind, and mine, off of this debacle, from the third part of Wanda's interview with Jazz guitarist Michael Gauthier, to S.D. Livingston's look at what can happen when we figure out how to use sand for energy. We also have the second part of "The Writer's Toolbox" exploration of how to use numerals (or not) when writing out times and dates, Hazel Anaka's frustration with how common sense doesn't seem to be working out for her, and of course Dear Barb provides some people with an outside view of their situation to help them sort things out.

Plus, if you're reading *The Voice Magazine* right now as a way of avoiding getting that essay done, our feature article looks at some strategies you can use that will help you get things started, and that's often the hardest part.

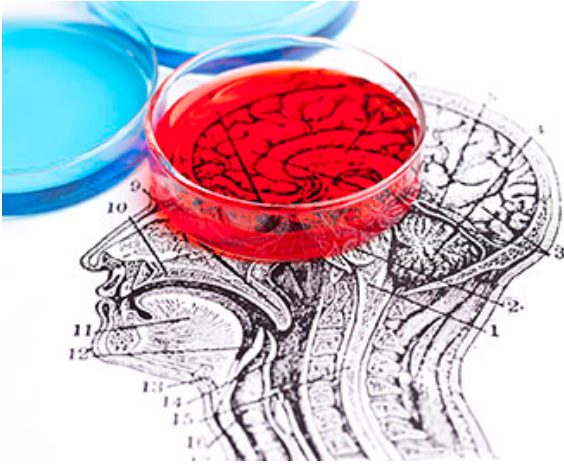




## Primal Numbers

### A Walrus and a Mop

S.D. Livingston



In *Alice in Wonderland*, it's pure fiction when the Walrus muses about sweeping up all the sand on the beach. What isn't fiction, though, is incredible new technology that uses sand to power batteries. The breakthrough is good news for our energy-hungry world. But just as the Walrus gobbled up every last oyster in sight, could the sand one day disappear as well?

The remarkable discovery is the brainchild of Zachary Favors, a graduate student at the University of California, Riverside. As Science Alert [reports](#), Favors was "relaxing after surfing" when he had the idea to

extract the silicone from sand, purify it, and use it to create small lithium-ion batteries.

Favors' sand-based batteries last three times longer than conventional ones, and there are enough deserts and beaches on the planet to keep business booming for years.

The idea is brilliant in its simplicity, and could be a real turning point in the push for cleaner energy. After all, there's no need to poison the environment with tar sands or fracking when all that beautiful sand is just laying around for the taking.

Just imagine—sand-based batteries could power everything from electric cars to computers to houses. Forget about peak oil. If the technology is perfected, we could see a rush for sand that makes the frenzy of the Gold Rush look tame.

The trouble, as with most things humans decide they want, is that no matter how abundant a resource might be, we always seem to find a way to use it up. That might seem like an exaggeration, until we remember that for most of humanity's time on earth, water was thought of as a resource without end. There were deserts, of course, and not everyone lived in an area with abundant water. But for the most part, we didn't give much thought to managing water as a finite resource.

The same can be said for forests, fish, and the many forms of wildlife we've hunted to extinction. Who would have thought that wolves, once slaughtered with abandon, would, one day, need protection as an endangered species?

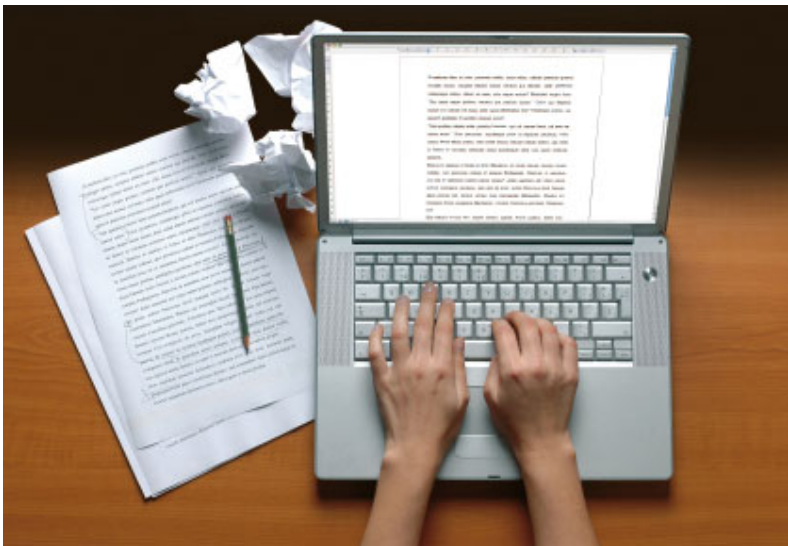
That doesn't mean we shouldn't be excited at the truly awesome potential of Favors' invention. What's not to like about a clean, easy-to access resource that could power everything from smart phones to pacemakers?

I only hope that humanity has finally learned its lesson about using resources wisely, no matter how plentiful they might seem. Otherwise, we could be surprised at how easy it really is to sweep all the sand from the beach.

*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.*

Essay Writing: Most of the Work is Getting Started

Barbara Lehtiniemi



How long do you stare at a blank screen, willing it to turn into a completed essay? I don't know if there are any studies on this, but I'll bet many students spend more time generating the enthusiasm to begin than they do writing. I used to be one of those students (and I still have relapses.)

If you keep track of how you spend your study time (and you really should,) you may be surprised to find that the act of writing is a smaller proportion of your time than you thought. Maybe you're spending more time thinking about writing, avoiding writing, or

complaining about the unfairness of having to write at all.

Delaying the inevitable eats up valuable time. You really just need to write. Even if you don't feel like it, you really must get started. Try a few of these strategies to trick yourself into getting that essay, or any writing project, underway.

**Don't wait for ideal conditions.** You may want a solid chunk of uninterrupted time to work on your essay (this is my great failing,) but you don't need it and may never get it. Just begin, even if you know you don't have time to squeeze out an entire first draft. Drafting one paragraph, or even a few sentences, gets you closer to your goal.

**Set the timer.** Tell yourself that you are going to write for only ten or twenty minutes. Turn off every other distraction (yep, including the internet and mobile phone,) set a timer, and do nothing but write for those minutes. Now you've got momentum and you'll probably want to keep writing. Alternatively, pretend you're writing under exam conditions. Write a 500-word essay in 60 minutes. If you can do it in an exam, you can do it now. Ready? Go!

**Get to the point.** If full sentences and paragraphs seem too daunting, begin your essay in point form. You can expand from your outline, or just start from scratch. When you think you have all your points written, put them in order and arrange them into full sentences and paragraphs. Voilà, first draft.

**Word dump.** Write down everything you know about your essay's topic. Don't worry about complete sentences, spelling, or grammar. Write whatever occurs to you in whatever order it comes to your mind. Don't try to organize or revise. When you're done, you may find you have enough material to organize into a first draft.

**Reward yourself.** Decide on a target and reward yourself for reaching it. For example, you may decide that once you reach 75% of the word count target for your first draft, you'll give yourself a little treat (or at least turn the internet back on.)

**Accept that a first draft is garbage.** Nobody is ever going to read your first draft, so don't worry about trying to churn out a masterpiece on your first attempt. Ernest Hemingway said that "The first draft of anything is shit" and he's right. The important thing is to get the draft written, so you can begin molding it into something worth handing in. Your first draft is done when you stop writing. Immediately re-save the file as a second draft, retaining your first draft. Re-name and save each subsequent draft so that you don't have to worry about losing something in a later revision.

Not many students enjoy writing essays—and I imagine few tutors enjoy marking them. But they are a fact of student life. I sometimes (okay, often) spend more time avoiding an essay (as evidenced by this [Voice article](#) from last year) than I do in writing it.

Like any task we procrastinate about, it really does feel good to get the damned thing done. And the only way to get that cursor to stop blinking is to get started.

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

## INTERNATIONAL NEWS DESK

### At Home and Abroad



#### At Home: Canadian Council of Chief Executives wants Federal Education Body

The Council of Chief Executives has released a report that is urging Ottawa to work with the provinces and industry to stop the quality of Canada's education and skills training from declining, according to a [report](#) from the Globe and Mail. It recommends a formal federal-provincial body to oversee learning and training in Canada, something about which even the Council's spokesperson, Ross Laver, admits "not everyone would go that far"

The Council is also reporting that there has been a significant lack of communication between the federal government and the provincial ministers of education, and questions how Canada can maintain a world-class labour force "when the people who are in charge of developing education and training policy won't talk to one another?"

#### Around the Globe: Global Initiative for Liberal Arts formed

PIE News is [reporting](#) on the founding of GALA, the Global Academy of Liberal Arts. With 16 member institutions, including leading Liberal Arts education providers from the UK, the USA, China, Australia, Poland, Canada and Mexico, the ultimate aim of GALA is to reassert the value of a non-STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Management) education and to "support the role of creativity and culture in the global economy."

GALA intends to provide a number of opportunities for students as well, through the establishment of exchange and study abroad programs, which will soon be available. Christina Slade, the vice chancellor of the Bath Spa University in Bath, England, is the architect of this initiative, saying, "I've had the idea of creating a global network of liberal arts organisations for some time, because I have a strong belief in the value of exploring the relationship between creativity and social engagement across national boundaries."



## Writer's Toolbox

Christina M. Frey

### Time is On Our Side, Part II



Whether you're a student, writer, or teacher, time is something that always seems in unfortunately short supply. Questions about how to write about time, though, are abundant. You may be clear now on whether you should use long form instead of numerals, but what about the 24-hour clock? Time zones? Let's spend a little time (ahem!) sorting it out:

#### Hours and Minutes

Unless you're using the 24-hour clock, separate the hours and minutes with a colon. For times that are right on the hour, Chicago style uses the colon plus *00*; AP style does not (and omits the colon in that case). Canadian style has no distinct preference, so check with your style guide first; otherwise, stay consistent.

*Example A (Chicago style): The flight arrives at 11:00 p.m.*

*Example B (AP style): The flight arrives at 11 p.m.*

Remember that regardless of what style you use, it's *noon* and *midnight* rather than *12 a.m.* or *12 p.m.*

#### 24 Hours A Day

In North America, the 24-hour clock is primarily used in the military, in medical settings, or in some government communication. It is always written in numerals, with or without a colon separating hours and minutes: for example, 1300, 13:00, or 1300h or 13:00h (the *h* stands for *hours*). Note that unlike with *a.m.* and *p.m.*, there's no space between the time and *h*.

Whether or not to use a colon depends on your audience. Scientific convention uses a colon, as does the federal government. But if you're writing about military time in a North American context, omit the colon.

Either way, if it's a single-digit hour, use a zero for the other digit. And don't ever use *a.m.* and *p.m.* with the 24-hour clock.

*Example C (military context): The shift will commence at 0330.*

*Example D (federal government context): The meeting will commence at 13:30.*

#### Time Zones

Sometimes including the time zone is necessary for clarity, particularly if you're writing for an audience spanning several time zones. There are just a few short rules: Time zones are abbreviated using capital letters, with no periods. Chicago style puts them in parentheses; AP style does not. And there's no need to spell them out.

*Example E (Chicago style): The conference will be held at 11:30 a.m. (MST).*

*Example F (AP style): The conference will be held at 11:30 a.m. MST.*

A caution: if you're writing about a location that is on daylight saving time—or that isn't when most other locations are—then be sure to specify that. 4:30 p.m. EST (Eastern Standard Time) and 4:30 p.m. EDT (Eastern Daylight Time) mean two different things.

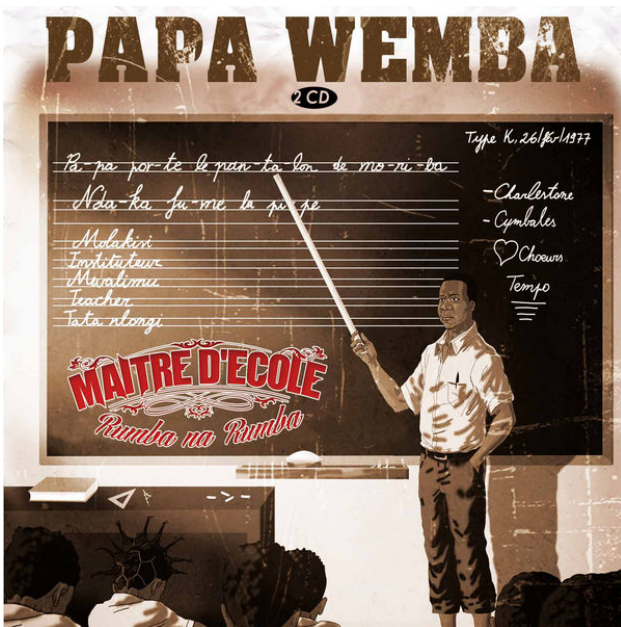
In next week's issue, we'll finish this series on time of day with a look at *a.m.* and *p.m.*: when and how to use them, and most importantly, how to punctuate them. In case you can't wait, though, here's a hint: use lowercase with periods. More details next week.

Christina M. Frey is a book editor, literary coach, and lover of great writing. For more tips and techniques for your toolbox, follow her on Twitter (@turntopage2) or visit her [blog](#).



## The Mindful Bard Papa Wemba

Wanda Waterman



Album: *Maître d'école*

Artist: Papa Wemba

### The Son of a Professional Mourner Brings Joyful Affirmation to a Broken World

"I said to myself, I don't want to play music only for Zaireans anymore. I am going to play music for all humanity."

- Papa Wemba

### The Inevitability of Musical Integration

First forays into world music are often accompanied by a prejudiced sense that we're listening to the music of "that culture." When we discover that the music of "that culture" is just as heavily influenced by foreign elements as is our own, we may become disappointed and demand music from a

purier tradition.

This is a mistake; it's in the very nature of music to seek out variety in its evolution, in the same way that nature seeks genetic diversity. It's only the purists who try to prevent this quite natural process from happening, and an excessive clinging to tradition can put the kibosh on creative innovations that could drive the genre forward and keep it relevant. Think, for example, of Bill Monroe's famous protective stance toward traditional bluegrass, which, ironically, he had invented by blending rural blues sounds with old-timey music.

### *Soukous* as Main Course with a Side of Western Instruments

The good news is that most musical genres, however heavily influenced by outside forces, manage to retain a unique and distinctive core sound. The *soukous* genre in general (and Papa Wemba's music in particular) is easily recognisable, and might be described as pulsing gushes of tinkling, joyful sounds in major keys—sounds

that fade out only to be replaced by new sound surges. It's the sound of a stubborn gladness, and Western instruments, languages, and stage costumes don't water it down a bit.

Papa Wemba (born Jules Shungu Wembadio Pene Kikumba) is a Tetela tribe member from the Democratic Republic of the Congo (formerly Zaire). He says that his mother, a professional mourner who sang at funerals, was his greatest musical influence. The oldest boy in his family, he was obliged to care for his siblings after both parents died when he was still young.

Wemba insists that if his mother had lived, her influence and encouragement would have made his music even better, but it's hard to imagine a more successful career. He's made more than 40 albums and has a huge fan base in Africa and a burgeoning cult following in the West. He's worked with Peter Gabriel, Eric Clapton, Stevie Wonder, Youssou N'dour, and Lucky Dube, among other notables, and has acted in two films.

### Backlash From "The Man"

Wemba's openness to Western culture was met with eagerness by young fans but ire from governing authorities fearing the demise of indigenous cultures. This compelled Wemba to add some more traditionally Congolese touches to his music, which he didn't seem to mind. But Wemba's embrace of European music, language, and dress was a kind of youthful rebellion that caught on like wildfire in his young audiences.

### A Comforting Voice

It's still hard to imagine how anyone could think of Wemba's music as a threat to *anything*; his is the kind of warm, soothing voice that makes the monsters under the bed shrink and fade. In some of the slower numbers he makes a precious little flourish at the end of his phrases that's absolutely heartwarming. The gorgeous choral harmonies are as marvelous as you could expect. You'll hear a rich and harmonious blend of sax, guitars, accordion, and electronica, as well as African wind and percussion instruments. Some high points: the title track, "Ma Rosa," "Africain comme toi," and "Métamorphose."

It's all quite 21st century, and it looks like there's no turning back. Panic inspired by recent false rumours of his death at the age of 64 were dispelled when he immediately tweeted, *Rest assured dear fans I am still here with you . . .*

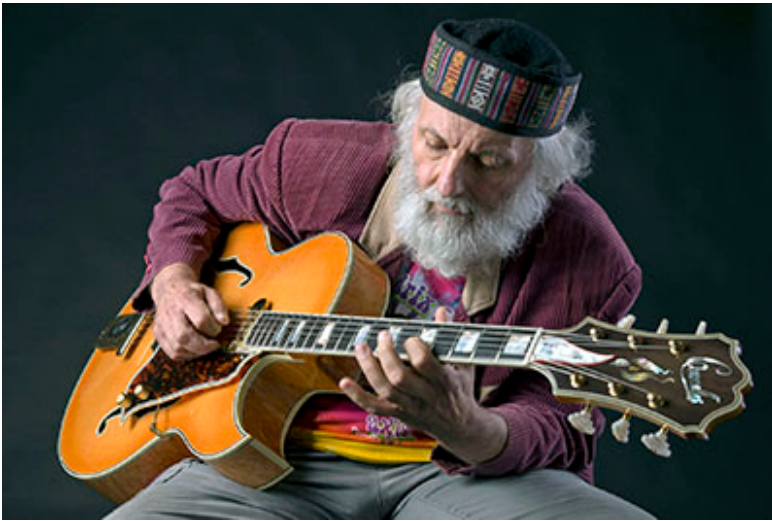
*Maître d'école* manifests four of the Mindful Bard's criteria for music well worth a listen.

- It's authentic, original, and delightful.
- It provides respite from a sick and cruel world, a respite enabling me to renew myself for a return to mindful artistic endeavor.
- It inspires an awareness of the sanctity of creation.
- It makes me appreciate that life is a complex and rare phenomena, making living a unique opportunity.

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

## In Conversation With Michael Gauthier, Part II

Wanda Waterman



### The Basic Logic of Fingers And Strings

*Michael Gauthier is a Montreal-based jazz musician who teaches guitar at the University of Montreal and at McGill University. His guitar sound is characterised by a warm, earthy bluesiness with the technical skill of a jazz master. A longtime fixture of the Montreal jazz scene, his memory houses a vast firsthand knowledge of the history of jazz in Montreal since the sixties. Recently he took the time to answer Wanda Waterman's questions about learning music by*

*ear, entering "the zone," and accompanying spoken word performances. You might also want to read the [first](#) and [second](#) parts of the interview. His music can be sampled and purchased [here](#).*

"... you improvise from an expanded consciousness, you discover that, in fact, *there are no wrong notes!* Appropriateness and correctness are products of the mind. Trying to live within those imaginary guidelines inhibits the flow."

-Kenny Werner in *Effortless Mastery*

### Extrapolating from an Incomplete Guitar

I didn't rationalize this, but I thought that if I could learn the *Third Man* theme at 10 years old on a guitar with just two strings, then I could just extrapolate and eventually learn how to play anything I heard on a record, and that's what I did. To this day, I will only reach for music sheets in dire desperation in the event that I can't figure something out.

It really is just basic logic that I'm a guitar player with six strings, four fingers, and one thumb, just like any other. But it's a skill that develops over time. When I listen to music, for example, I pretty much know what the guy is doing without even picking up my guitar—that is, if it's of the type of music that I play.

Most blues and jazz stuff I can listen to and either know that I've done it before or that it's from a place where I've been. You have to be able to jump into the language, so to speak. It's like learning the Egyptian language in Egypt as opposed to buying a book.

That's the way it's been ever since and it's the way I try to teach my students. I feel as though I need to redress them and fix their bad habits. The kinds of bad habits I'm talking about are things like reaching for the book instead of learning things by heart. I'm old school.

### In the Zone

*Do you tend to enter a zone wherein you're somehow, in some mysterious way, more capable of making beautiful music?*

For sure. There are people out there who automatically go into that zone the minute their fingers touch their instrument. For me the zone is more elusive; I can be in the zone for a couple of weeks and then out of the zone for a couple of weeks, for no apparent reason.

I can tell my students about the existence of that zone but I can't actually depend on that zone myself. I think that most of my students have a handle on the zone, because I can see that they will notice it at brief intervals. I think that that zone is probably the second biggest reason people get into music in the first place, rivaled only by the fact that they love music. Even when a person is playing something like "Gloria," or "House of the Rising Sun," it's the same zone, you know?

*What conditions are more likely to bring on the "zone" for you?*

A good drummer and a good bass player! This is true in jazz and blues, especially, because it's a collective musical experience. I disagree with a lot of musicians who always blame somebody else if it doesn't go well; they blame poor performances on their drummers, or bass players, or what have you. It's just their egos.

I, on the other hand, believe that any of the musicians, including myself, could be at fault for a performance going badly. For the sake of professionalism, however, I feel that I have developed the ability to produce an acceptable product even when I'm not in the zone. My worst days are kind of at the low range of acceptable, the better days are a gift, and the great days are miraculous. I hope that audience members are paying close enough attention that they know when it's a good day or a bad day.

### **Accompanying Poets**

*Let's talk about accompanying the spoken word performances. You seem to do it amazingly well, and it all comes together so well with no rehearsal. When you and your trio did the accompaniment for the Hundred Thousand Poets for Change event last year, was it the first time you'd accompanied spoken art?*

Yes, it was the first time. I felt a little bit inadequate due to my unfamiliarity with the emotional expectations of the poems. It's one thing to simply read a poem on a piece of paper; however, if you were to read a really good William Butler Yeats poem, the emotion would be right there in the writing. The thing is, I didn't even have a chance to read the poems beforehand.

Another indication for me is the rhythm of the words. It's funny, because the last couple of people I've asked about what they wanted from me have either asked for something bluesy or something sad. They never ask for something chipper. In other words, it seems like most people's poems deal with morose issues.

### **A Bluesy Kind of Jazz**

In that sense, I kind of have the upper hand, as I've played a lot of bluesy music in my life. Mind you, I still consider myself a jazz musician as opposed to a hard-core blues musician. On that same token, I am more on the bluesy end of jazz music, as opposed to the intellectual end of it. These poems were not just bluesy in the blues music sense—they were also bluesy in the melancholy sense.

*(to be concluded next week)*





## Not Enough

I firmly believe that to survive in this world we all need the right combination of basic intelligence and a healthy dose of common sense. We don't have any say in how much of the first ingredient we're blessed or cursed with. We simply hope our parents didn't settle.

Common sense is a bit trickier. Dictionary.com defines it as "sound, practical judgment that is independent of specialized knowledge, training or the like; normal, native intelligence." Naturally I wasn't content with just that so I took a 'common sense' [quiz](#) (and did rather poorly by the way. Try it and you'll see why.). One of the correct answers tells us that the judgment must be "based on things that are common knowledge and established facts, either by the person making the judgment or by society in general."

We all know common sense isn't as common as it should be. We know that those with very high intelligence can be sorely lacking in it often because they want to reason things out. We know that the highly emotional can let their feelings over-ride what would appear to be a common sense decision.

Common sense is learned and is the result of the knowledge we have. It is fluid but not universal in that it differs from setting to setting, country to country. It requires social interactions so that we can learn from others. Common sense in animals leads to self-preservation.

Common sense keeps us from putting our hand into a fire or stepping out in front of a speeding car. Children do not innately know this. They need to be taught—either by listening or 'learning the hard way.'

So, if I have above average intelligence and a healthy dose of common sense, I'm sitting pretty, right? If I am willing to learn from my own mistakes and those of others, I'm ahead of the game, right? If I routinely replicate past successes, my own and those of others, I'm really cooking, right? If I can ask and learn or read and learn, I can keep growing and improving the quality of my life.

So, given all that, why don't I consistently do what is smart or right; what is in my best interests; what will improve the quality of my life?

Hell, if I know. Why do I delay returning to the treadmill until I've regained much of the weight I lost? Why do I believe that this time just one sweet square or one scoop of ice cream will satiate? Why do I wait until the chickweed has covered the ground before grabbing the jug of Roundup? Why do I believe that I'll have more time this summer to maintain a yard that's clearly too much? Why do I believe that certain leopards (people) can change their spots?

Hell, if I know. I just keep remembering Oprah saying we are doomed to repeat the same mistakes until we learn the life lesson needed. Sometimes smarts and common sense aren't enough, from where I sit.

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



*Dear Barb*

*Barbara Godin*

## Clear Skin, Clean Slate

**Dear Barb:**

*Hi, I will be attending my first year university in September and I am looking forward to it. My problem is that during my last year of high school I developed acne and I'm self-conscious. I tried to talk to my mom, but she just says it's nothing and that it will go away. I really would like to get his cleared up before I begin university. Do you know what I could use to get rid of this acne really quick? Dave in Nova Scotia.*

Hi Dave:

Acne is a very common condition in teenagers. Most cases can be managed at home with a variety of natural remedies. For example, wash your face at least twice a day, maybe more often if you have oily skin. A lot of people believe that washing your face with hot water is necessary to open the pores, but warm water works well and is less irritating. Wash with a mild soap, using gentle movements with your fingertips. Also, make sure you drink plenty of water, get adequate exercise and regular sleep. Try not to squeeze your pimples, as this could lead to scarring. If your acne becomes severe you may need to see your doctor for medication. There are lot of topical treatments and oral medications that effectively treat acne. Most teens outgrow their acne without any treatment and it quickly becomes a distant memory. So maybe mom was right!

**Dear Barb:**

*I recently deactivated my facebook account and now my friends are mad at me and think I'm being arrogant, but I'm not. I just found facebook a boring waste of time. I got tired of reading all the posts about all the mundane things people are doing. A friend of mine has a two year old daughter and her whole life has been posted on facebook, with pictures and some are not very flattering. How is she going to feel when she gets older and sees this? There is just no privacy anymore! I know you can change your settings, but the only way to truly get away is to deactivate your account. As well, I found that I was getting together with friends less often because I could keep up with their news on facebook; therefore the human factor was missing. I am at a point where I will be starting my career soon and I don't want potential employers to search my facebook page, as there most likely will be information from when was younger that I'd rather not be used to judge my employability. What is your opinion? Thanks, Matt.*

Hi Matt:

I don't think you are being arrogant; a lot of people are starting to feel the way you do. I believe Facebook has its place in society, but you are right many people have been posting everything they do and once it's on Facebook, it's easily accessible. Facebook definitely has its advantages for people who want to connect with family members living at a distance, or who are not able to get together due to expense or other reasons. Perhaps your friends fear they will lose contact with you. You could point out to them that now your visits will most likely be face to face.

Thanks for writing Matt.

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

**OVERHEARD****FUNNY THING ABOUT PALESTINE**

YOU KNOW, THERE'S  
A FUNNY THING  
ABOUT  
PALESTINE . . .

ACTUALLY,  
THERE'S NOTHING  
FUNNY ABOUT  
PALESTINE!



May justice come.  
May peace reign.  
May love overcome all.

Amen.

WRITTEN BY WANDA WATERMAN



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