

THE VOICE

MAGAZINE

Vol 18 Iss 30 2010-07-30

Neverending Story

The human saga repeats

Play it again

Music of the heart

World Without Me

A victim's journey

Plus:

*From Where I Sit, Health Matters,
Sister Aurora, and much more . . .*



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**The Voice
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The Voice is published
every Friday in HTML
and PDF format

To subscribe for weekly
email reminders as
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Special thanks to
Athabasca University's
The Insider for its
frequent contributions

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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



EDITORIAL

Christina M. Frey



Thank You for the Music

“Friendship is like a violin; the music may stop now and then, but the strings will last forever.”

Author Unknown

Late July is usually moving month in our community. Often, we’re the ones heading from home and comfort on a new and exciting adventure to set up a new home in a strange city. This summer, though, we’re among those that remain behind, saying goodbye.

This week, I watched my daughter bid farewell to one of her best friends, and the parting was hard. Saying “goodbye” has never been easy for me, either, despite its inevitability at this point in our lives. I look at the youthful tears, and I think ahead to next summer, when my own dear friend will leave the area. Ahead to a future year when we’ll uproot, saying our own goodbyes to friends remaining locally. Ahead still further to comings and goings, hails and farewells, and the many partings that seem to characterize the modern lifestyle.

At first, I’m sad. That’s natural and even proper: Gandalf had it right when he said, “I will not say: do not weep; for not all tears are an evil.” So I have my little cry.

At the same time, I’ve come to understand that partings are a bittersweet mix of both sorrow and joy. We’ve heard over and over the truism that friends touch our lives, but it isn’t until it’s time to say goodbye that we really realize how much our friendships with different individuals have affected us.

The truth is, adults though we may be, we’re never truly finished growing. Just as kids change and grow as their childhood progresses, so too does our adult personhood develop over time—through interactions, experiences, and, well, life happening.

The friendships we form, no matter how brief, no matter how close, and no matter how they end, impact who we will someday become.

Even the disappointments, like the best friend who I thought would be there for life, but who lost touch as time passed: our happy times of several years ago remain ever green, even though the music of our friendship stopped playing over the years.

Or the ex who seemed to have potential but whose heart turned out otherwise; even though the memories aren’t pleasant, I have to acknowledge that those months with him did change the course of my life. If something negative can become positive when examined in the long, arcing trail of one person’s history, how much more significantly etched into our personalities are the good people whose companionship along the journey of life helped to make us who we are.

When the time comes to say goodbye, whether to friends leaving or those staying behind, I’ll cry and laugh. I’ll weep for the present parting. But I’ll laugh for the good times that have passed, for the moments shared, for the life lived. And especially, I’ll laugh for the future joy that will be mine each time I think upon these things.

IN CONVERSATION WITH . . .

Wanda Waterman St. Louis



Janet Klein, Part III

Janet Klein has amassed an international cult following by singing little-known songs of the 1910s, '20s, and '30s in period dress in an evocative, childlike voice. Her repertoire includes Yiddish tunes, Tin Pan Alley, early hot jazz, ragtime, vaudeville, and novelty tunes. Janet recently took the time to chat with Wanda Waterman St. Louis about packaging, Australian vaudeville, and the grand adventure of living in the past. Be sure to read the first and second parts of this interview.

Meanwhile, Back at the Party . . .

Also there at the party was John Reynolds, a great guitar player. John's grandma was ZaSu Pitts, the silent movie character actress. When he started playing, he asked me if I'd like to sit in.

I said, "Oh, I'm afraid I don't know how to sit in. I only know how to play by myself."

So they let me sing a couple of ditties, one of which was a blues song called "If I Can't Sell It I'll Keep Sitting On It." As I was playing it, they joined me. It was the first time I had played with other people, and I was flabbergasted.

Doors kept opening, and I met more people interested in this kind of music. I began to have band fantasies and eventually ended up with the Parlor Boys. I've been so lucky to find these wonderful, wonderful musicians and be able to share them.

Beautiful Printed Things

As for the packaging, I came out of the design department at UCLA and had started to work for a commercial printing company in 1990, so I'd worked with designers all day making beautiful printed things. And I had been collecting photographs and printed matter like vaudevillian playbills, and so the packaging came very easily. When I see these things I just want to dive in and superimpose myself on everything. I love everything about that era—the architecture, the music, the art . . .

The 1910s, '20s, and '30s Around the World

Over the years, we've done a little touring, and I always love to look for material from this era in different parts of the world, which is always great! (What was in the air?)



I've gone to Japan four or five times. In Kamakura, just 45 minutes outside Tokyo, one of the clubs where we played was called Tipitina's, named after the club in New Orleans. It was filled with old street signs and looked like something on the bayou.

When I walked into the club, I saw a television monitor over the bar, and they were playing a film compilation that a friend of mine had worked on; it was called *Times Ain't Like They Used To Be*, and it's one of my favourite things ever. It's made of film shorts culled from the Library of Congress and other places, with shorts of people like Jimmy Rogers and field-type recordings of ex-slave bands, jug bands, people on their front porches in Appalachia, etc. It's just an amazing set of films. And there it was in Kamakura!

So I asked the owner, "What was going on here in the 1930s?" He gave me a compilation from the Japanese Columbia label, a set of Japanese recordings from that era. I was knocked out, and when I went home I learned some of the songs with a little help from some friends I'd made in Japan.

We have a company there that represents us, that represents American roots music in Japan. Over the years on my Japanese releases . . . I've done some exclusive things for them, and I've done some songs in Japanese. I'm kind of doing the same thing there that I am here, which is reintroducing songs from the old days that people don't know.

In every town in Japan where we played, we were set up with local bands that played music from that era. So we've played with Japanese jug bands, klezmer bands, [and] early swing bands, and we've met up with some great people.

Last year we went to Australia, and so I did a little research and found a vaudeville team called Flotsam and Jetsam and I learned one of their tunes, "Ozzie Isn't Aussie Is He Lizzie?" Nobody seemed to have heard of it, but then when we did it, people did remember it, and there was this *aha* moment.

Cascades

It's such an adventure. It began as a very lonely pastime and for so long I felt that I was all by myself with my interests. When I came out with this music, it just cascades back at me. I love it when people come up to me and tell me about their flapper aunts. They've always got good stories for me. People are always sending me films and soundtracks to things and old radio shows, their wedding shoes from the '20's . . . it just comes from every which way.



HEALTH MATTERS

Katie D'Souza

**Fish Oil**

Most of us have heard of fish oil. If a co-worker or friend isn't surreptitiously popping the capsules with their lunch, then magazine ads have showcased the product, or radios have blared testimonials. What is all of the hype about?

Fish oil is, simply put, oil that is derived from fish. Some comes from the liver of the fish; think cod liver oil, the supplement that grandparents praised and kids disliked. Other fish oils are processed from the body of the fish itself. The oil can be derived from many different species: from large fish such as salmon to the popular smaller species, like anchovies, sardines, and herring.

Depending on the species and what part of the fish the oil comes from, fish oil can have different characteristics. For example, cod liver oil contains vitamins A and D, since these fat-soluble vitamins are stored in the fish's liver and thus naturally become part of the oil. Other fish, like the smaller species, are naturally fatty, and thus the therapeutic benefits of their oil can be obtained through dosages far smaller than those required from the oil of larger, leaner fish.

The Good

Why would anyone supplement their diet with fish oil? There are two main components in fish oil: EPA and DHA (eicosapentaenoic acid and docosahexaenoic acid, respectively). They are what make fish oil "work."

There is excellent research showing the benefits of EPA on those with cardiovascular disease (or those hoping to prevent it). The EPA in fish oil helps maintain arterial integrity; less damage to the arteries means less plaque formation, and a lower chance of heart attacks, strokes, or other complications. Additionally, fish oil may help reduce high cholesterol and clot formation (when the body forms a blood clot, a stroke can result).

An additional well-studied benefit of EPA is its ability to reduce inflammation. Inflammation means the "itis" conditions—think rheumatoid arthritis and osteoarthritis, for example—and fish oil helps mitigate these.

Another aspect of fish oil that's been extensively studied is its effect on the brain. The component DHA in fish oil works on brain tissue, helping people keep sharp with optimal brain function and promoting healthy brain development in children and unborn babies.

The Bad

So far, fish oil sounds like the wonder liquid! But is there a catch? Well, one area of concern is the dosage. The necessary dose depends on your reasons for using the fish oil. If you're merely hopping on the bandwagon to "try it out," then lower doses (under 750 mg EPA and 500 mg DHA) will suffice.

If, however, you're hoping to reduce the swelling and inflammation associated with rheumatoid arthritis, for

example, you've got to be picky about the amount of EPA in your daily dose. It's recommended that more than 1500 mg of EPA is necessary as a *starting dose* to shift any inflammatory mediators. Less than this may not have any effect, and more may even be required.

In addition, your health care practitioner might prescribe a higher dose if you have had cardio complications in the past.

The Ugly

A bigger problem is the pollution issue. It's well-known that conventionally farmed fish can be a hotbed for pollutants like mercury, PCBs, and other chemicals. When choosing a fish oil, check that it is from fish harvested from the wild; otherwise, be cautious about purchasing it.

But keep in mind that even wild-caught fish can be subject to a host of contaminants, especially heavy metals. Fish oil should always be third party tested, with a Certificate of Analysis (COA), and there should be concise information about this (including what contaminants were tested for) on the label. If there's not, forget it.

Another point to consider is the food chain dilemma. If you consume fish oil from large wild fish, keep in mind that they have lived longer in potentially polluted waters, and often are predatory, consuming other small species (along with their contaminants). Because of lifespan and diet, the total toxin load in these large fish is potentially higher than that of small fatty fish.

Fish oil should always be third party tested ... [for] ... contaminants, especially heavy metals.

Finally, not everyone can take fish oil without adverse effects. For instance, if you're on blood thinning medication, you should consult with your health care practitioner prior to trying fish oil; fish oil has a mild, but definite, blood thinning effect.

Alternatives

What if you're vegetarian, or have decided that the risks aren't worthwhile? Don't worry! Nature has provided a way for you to gain some of the therapeutic benefits you might find in fish oil. Certain algae species contain EPA and DHA. There's less concern over toxicity with algae oils, and there's no worry about overfishing. Note, though, that the levels of EPA and DHA are significantly lower than those in fish oil. Flax oil also contains omega-3 fatty acids, but the body's conversion of the omega-3 to EPA and DHA is limited.

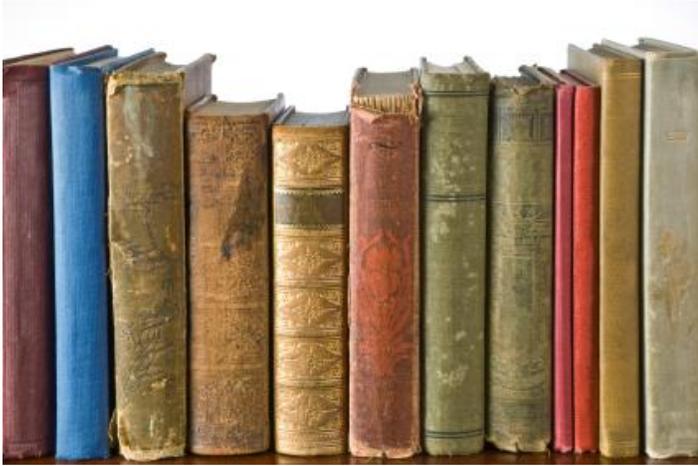
In sum, should you be taking fish oil? It's up to you and your health care practitioner. First decide what you might want to use it for, and whether its use is contraindicated for you. If you do choose to supplement with fish oil, read all the product labels carefully before buying!

Katie D'Souza is an AU graduate and a licensed naturopathic doctor. She currently lives in Ontario.

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.

WRITE STUFF

S.D. Livingston



Seven Stories

Digital downloads of *Avatar* and *Harry Potter*. E-readers. Blogs. Mashups on YouTube. The modern flood of entertainment might be death to our attention spans, but what a way for them to go: arguably, in an age overflowing with more originality and choice than ever before.

Er, hang on a minute. Originality? Maybe when it comes to the *expression* of ideas and plots. But the ideas themselves are older than Gilgamesh, that king who became the stuff of the first recorded legends. In fact, with apologies to all those studio

execs scrambling to create the next summer blockbuster, there really isn't anything new under the sun—not when it comes to the basic themes of the stories we tell.

Christopher Booker, a British literary critic, explained it wonderfully in his book *The Seven Basic Plots: Why We Tell Stories*. As Booker tells it, the essential plots are the Quest, Voyage and Return, Comedy, Overcoming the Monster, Rags to Riches, Tragedy, and Rebirth. Other writers have given slightly different labels to those categories, but the underlying idea is the same.

Think *New Moon: Eclipse* is fresh, creative stuff? It's really just a variation on the Rebirth theme, with a dash of Overcoming the Monster thrown in to spice things up. Not so different from 1946's *It's a Wonderful Life*, in which a dark force threatens to overwhelm the protagonist but is eventually overcome. And if you laugh at the convoluted antics of Becky Bloomwood in the *Shopaholic* series, you'd have fit right in with the 16th-century audiences who found Shakespeare's *Comedy of Errors* a real rib-tickler.

Which, in its own way, is reassuring. If those enduring plots tell us that countless generations have dealt with the same central issues, maybe we humans aren't mucking things up too badly. After all, the planet's still spinning, isn't it?

But the seven-stories theory also raises an interesting question. If all we're doing is rehashing the same basic plots, then why bother? Why spend all that time, effort, and those enormous CGI budgets trying to repackage, say, Homer's *Odyssey* when we could just stick to the original and get on with *really* new stuff—like missions to Mars?

Well, besides the fact that we're hardwired to create, the key to those seven stories is that they allow people to make sense of their world, whether that world was (or is) Renaissance Italy or modern-day America. And what better way to understand the confusing muddle that's humanity than through characters, settings, and language you can find recognizable and relatable?

For example, it's one thing for a 21st-century teen to imagine herself as Bella in *New Moon*, to sort through her own conflicting emotions alongside characters that could step seamlessly into her world (well, except for the bit about vampires and werewolves). Hand that girl a copy of *Romeo and Juliet*, though, and her eyes are likely to glaze over. Not because the story is any less thrilling or universal, but because the characters just don't speak her language. It's like being stuck with that weird, foreign cousin at a family reunion. Potentially fascinating, but the conversation flows a lot easier with your own friends.



So if it seems that everything old is new again, there's no need to despair. From *The Epic of Gilgamesh* to the latest *Bourne* instalment, those seven stories have served us well. And it's vital that we keep telling them.

CLICK OF THE WRIST – Call of Adventure

Thanks to the upcoming Civic Holiday, cities will empty as vacationers take advantage of the long weekend. But relaxing on the lake isn't for everyone. These people spent their leisure time on the road of high adventure; their day-by-day accounts make an exciting read for outdoor enthusiasts, whether armchair or otherwise.

Bicycle for One

From Fairbanks, Alaska, to St. John's, Newfoundland: several years ago, Mike had the vacation of a lifetime when he undertook a cycling trip across Canada. His cycling log, with many photographs, is a gripping panorama of the Canadian land and people.

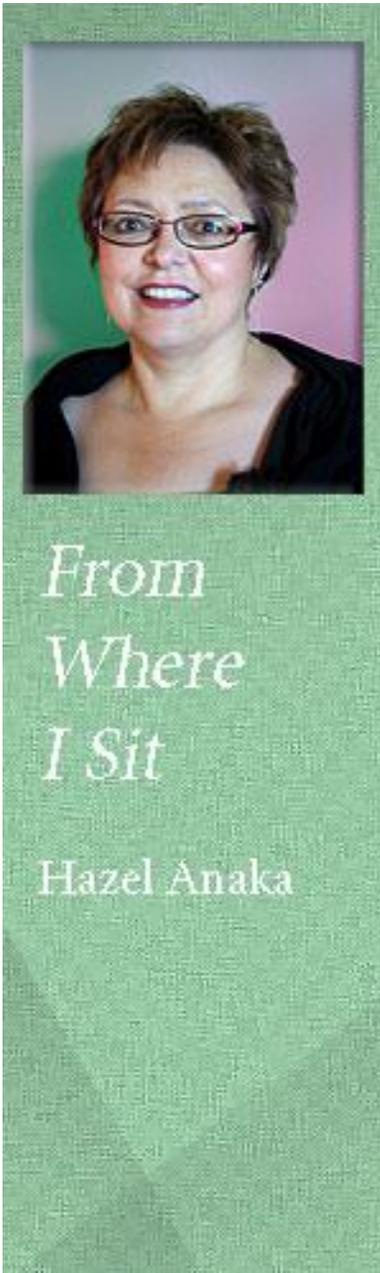
Two if by Sea

16-year-old Abby Sunderland's bid to become the youngest person to sail solo around the globe was cut short this past June after a storm in the Indian Ocean snapped her boat's mast. Her account of her travels, accompanied by photos and videos, is exciting—particularly when you consider Abby's age! Also worth checking out is the [blog](#) of her brother, Zac Sunderland, who similarly chronicled his 2008-09 solo sail.



Hit the Road

For the past few summers, B.C. resident Dana Meise has been pursuing his dream of hiking across Canada via the Trans Canada Trail. Meise started in Newfoundland, and is currently trekking through Ontario. His webpage includes photographs, videos, and a link to his Facebook page, where he's received messages from the various people he's met along the way.



Treated Right?

A July 25 article on page A3 of the *Edmonton Journal* has me shaking my head. The half-page story appeared under the headline “Mother sues son she abandoned”; the subheading was “BC woman, 71, seeks support from children under archaic statute.”

Shirley Anderson is suing her adult children for support under The Parents’ Maintenance Act of 1922. The law came into effect during a recession, when no social safety nets existed, in a bid to prevent the poor and sick from becoming wards of the state. It obligates children to support their “dependent” parents. Yet it does not define what a parent is or comment on the relative worth of the parenting job.

This case boggles the lay mind and highlights the potential problems when laws that no longer serve a purpose remain on the books unchallenged. For the record, let’s establish that I’m not a lawyer, and that my only information on this case is what I read in the paper. I acknowledge that people sometimes get misquoted or that words can be taken out of context. I understand that the courts’ hands are tied by existing laws. (The Attorney General recommends its repeal. Nevertheless, on August 3 and 4, after years of battle, Shirley Anderson’s children will appear in court to fight this suit.)

I don’t understand why there is always a lawyer willing to take on any case, regardless of the circumstances.

The whole situation is bizarre on many levels. The children are quoted in the article as saying that Anderson was the “mother [they] never had,” that “she doesn’t even know [they] are alive . . . she never worked and she never worked at her family either,” and that “the only time she called was to ask for money.” In the article, they describe their upbringing as “dysfunctional, harsh, brutal.”

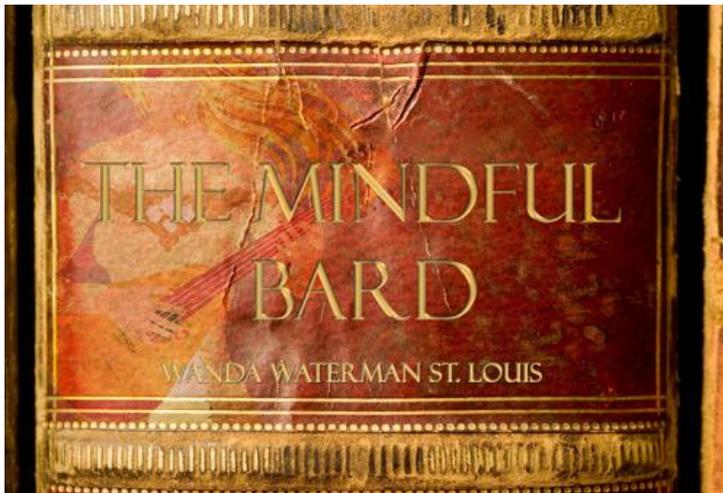
Only four kids are being sued because the fifth is in and out of jail, and the likelihood of collecting anything from him is remote. Anderson has included in her suit a son, now forty-six, whom she abandoned when he was 15 years old. Most of the kids haven’t had any contact with their mother for 20 years. The only daughter vows she will go to jail rather than pay a dime to her mother.

The court has demanded ten years’ worth of financial records, with an estimated 500 pages and nearly 2100 photocopies required *just since May*.

An interim judgment of \$50 a month (or \$10 per child) was awarded in 2000. It is unclear whether any money was ever paid, but the mother’s lawyer intends to get the amount substantially increased (to at least \$300 a month, per child).

The ultimate outrage, for me, is provoked by the words of her lawyer, Donald McLeod of Victoria, who has never met his client. He is quoted in the *Edmonton Journal* as saying, “My interest, quite frankly, is to see that someone is treated right, and that’s all I care about.”

Treated right? Oh my God. If this story accurately represents what happened in this family, it seems these children were scarred by this woman and their upbringing. The emotional and financial burden of fighting this adds insult to injury. Charles Dickens got it right when he said, “the law is a ass,” from where I sit.



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

DVD: *The Lovely Bones*

Theatrical Release: December 2009

DVD Release: April 2010

Starring: Mark Wahlberg, Rachel Weisz, Susan Sarandon, Stanley Tucci, Michael Imperioli, Saoirse Ronan, Rose Mclver

Director: Peter Jackson

Screenwriters: Fran Walsh, Philippa Boyens, Peter Jackson

Composer: Brian Eno

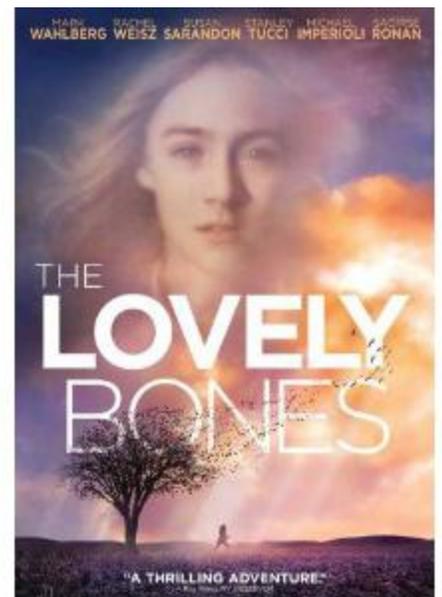
DreamWorks Pictures

The Hero's Journey for Abuse Survivors

“These were the lovely bones that had grown around my absence: the connections—sometimes tenuous, sometimes made at great cost, but often magnificent—that happened after I was gone. And I began to see things in a way that let me hold the world without me in it.”

The Lovely Bones (film)

To begin: yes, this film was a critical flop, and yes, it is a Bard pick, both for good reasons. It was a critical flop because it fell far short of manifesting the artistic merit of the novel on which it is based (and who could have predicted that?). Yet it is also a Bard pick because of its cultural significance and its power to evoke thought, feeling, and new art.



True, the characters lack depth. They are too iconic—even stereotypical—to be believed. But the same could be said of the *Lord of the Rings* trilogy's characters, and few complained about that. Maybe archetypal characters are a mark of Jackson's style. Let it go.

I'm not going to say that this isn't a story about death. But on a deeper level, it is also very much a story about life, or rather about a peculiar life path.

Abuse survivors will recognize the stages one encounters following the traumatic event: the numbness unto death, followed by a profound and lasting sense of loneliness and emptiness, followed by a realization of the horror of what has happened, followed by the struggle to find a means of coping. Sometimes, they occur all at once.

Sweetly, tenderly, and, finally, with violence, death enters our lives and casts its stinking fog into every corner. Our task becomes to endure to the end, somehow emerging with treasures in our grasp. Just like the dead, the abuse victim is somehow removed from loved ones; a wall quickly forms, a wall composed of scrambled signals, silence, and darkness. Loved ones respond in turn with withdrawal, anger, and thoughts of revenge on the abuser.

Susie Salmon learns to cope, as many of us do, by finding for herself a peer, a fellow victim who can act both as a guide and traveling companion on the road to recovery.

There is a delightful segment in which Susie and her pal Holly Golightly (aptly named for the dreamy-eyed escort girl in *Breakfast at Tiffany's*), a fellow murder victim, discover that the "in-between world" that they inhabit is malleable, that their imaginations can make of it whatever they will. And so they create a spectacular, whimsical reality as a kind of bubble against their pain, nonetheless all the while harbouring a longing for reunion with those from whom they've been stolen.

Many abuse survivors turn to art, the great gift of a universe that tolerates the intolerable, for solace and healing; it is nearly always a wise and effective move (Adolph Hitler being one obvious exception).

Susie's final entry into heaven is marked by a decision to turn back for just a moment; she must first experience a deep and meaningful encounter with her beloved, leaving a bit of her presence with him as a means of beckoning him into paradise. She has become in the end a tender Bodhisattva who refuses to enter nirvana until she can somehow be assured that she has brought a part of suffering humanity with her.

The Lovely Bones manifests five of The Mindful Bard's criteria for films well worth seeing: 1) it stimulates my mind; 2) it provides respite from a sick and cruel world, a respite enabling me to renew myself for a return to mindful artistic endeavour; 3) it is about attainment of the true self; 4) it inspires an awareness of the sanctity of creation; and 5) it displays an engagement with and compassionate response to suffering.



Sister Aurora

There's a rainbow dancing in the sky tonight, and I think I'm gonna go outside . . .

The lights! They're starting! It's like a dancing rainbow!

There's a rainbow dancing in the sky tonight,
 A shimmering veil of celestial light,
 Above every tear that I've cried,
 Beyond all the fear that I hide.
 There's a rainbow dancing in the sky tonight,
 And I think I'm gonna go outside.

There's a glad song rising in my soul tonight
 A song about freedom,
 a song about life,
 And the power is on,
 and the volume is high
 And they can't shut it down though
 I'll know that they'll try
 There's a glad song rising in my soul tonight
 And I think that I'll be singing it outside.

There's a night hawk singing
 in the sky tonight,
 Dipping and soaring in the flickering light,
 Calling,
 "Fly, sister,
 fly, sister,
 Fly, sister, fly!"

There's a night hawk singing
 in the sky tonight
 And I think
 I'm gonna go outside.



Look at that!

AUSU UPDATE



Convocation 2010

AUSU wishes to congratulate this year's graduates, whether attending Convocation in person or by distance. We wish you the best of luck in your future pursuits. You are an inspiration to all AU students!

AUSU Executive Election

AUSU has recently held its internal election for the Executive. We wish to congratulate Barbara Rielly (President), Bethany Tynes (Vice President External and Student Affairs) and Sarah Kertcher (Vice President Finance and Administration) on their election and thank those that ran for their willingness to serve.

Internal elections are being held to determine committee membership and we expect that all will be in place shortly. Our new Council is taking its bearings and has already begun to set the direction for this term.

Student Issues

AUSU recently completed a compilation of reported student issues covering a two year period; all issues were recorded in such a way as to ensure that student information remains protected and private. This effort confirmed what we long suspected; that tutor problems were the single biggest issue faced by our students (56 of 120 complaints).

Outdated course materials and errors in texts continue to be reported as well as were exam issues, slowness of the transfer process, and the scantiness of information in School of Business FAQs. Over that two year period there was a decrease in the number of complaints about student financing, exam request problems, difficulty registering in more than six courses, and materials shortages for courses. Kudos to AU for improving in those areas. Now if we could only get the Tutors' Union to the table . . .

New 2010 AUSU Handbook/Planners – Arrived!

Finally! People have already started receiving the new planners in the mail, and we're currently shipping them out as fast as the orders come in. Full of useful information about AUSU, writing styles, course grading, great finds online for your studies that you may not have known about, as well as having places to write down your phone numbers, keep track of your assignments, and, oh yeah, a year's worth of calendar to plan out your schedule too. We'll give one free to each AUSU member just for the asking.

Remember, though, we only print a limited number of these each year, so when they're gone, they're gone.

Let 'em Know who Represents for You!

AUSU logo mugs, hoodies, USB keys, and much more are all available for sale from our office. Also, used locks can be purchased at half price! Check out our merchandise catalog on our front page. You should

check out our hoodies in particular—made in Canada and 100% bamboo, we're offering them for just barely over our cost, and they're both durable and comfortable.

And if you have new little ones in your family, or know somebody who does, check out our baby onesies. Made by American Apparel, these onesies are high quality and let folks know your kids are growing up to great things as a "Future Graduate of Athabasca U"

AUSU Scheduling Meeting with Tutors' Union – Not really an Update

Some things resist change. We're still waiting for a response from the Tutor's Union as to when we might be able to meet with them to discuss ways that AUSU and the Tutor's Union can work together to ensure that students are getting the contact they need. Unfortunately, they haven't yet replied, so we're stepping up our campaign to get in touch with them. If you want to help, the next time you're talking to your tutor, ask them if they know when the Tutor's Union will meet with AUSU so that the groups can work together on common issues.

Our statistics we've been collecting from the forums and your calls show that issues with tutors - specifically the amount of time taken for marking assignments and exams are your number one concern. Help us help you.

SmartDraw Program Renewal

Some of you who took advantage of our program to provide SmartDraw software to members have been getting notifications that your software license will soon be expiring. Fortunately, AUSU will be continuing this program, so if you haven't already, go to the AUSU home page to download the newest version.

SmartDraw allows you to create a wide range of graphics for your assignments and submit them electronically in a Word file. You can also place your graphics in Excel or PowerPoint files, or export them as TIF, GIF, or JPEG files to make a web graphic or even a logo. Just a few of the graphics you can make include Venn diagrams, genetics charts, graphs, organizational and flow charts, and Gantt charts.

For any course that requires charts that cannot be easily created in Word or Excel, this should be a real time saver and make it easier to submit all portions of an assignment by email.

Remember, though, that you should always check with your tutor to find out if there is a specific format he or she prefers. Your tutor does not have to have SmartDraw to view these graphics, however. Installations under this program are good for one year. The package includes both the Standard and Health Care editions of SmartDraw.

AUSU
Representing AU
Undergrads

Student Gear

2009 merchandise

The catalog features six items of merchandise:

- AUSU sticky notes
- Voice water bottle and mug set
- Colorful stress balls
- Red hoodie
- AUSU logo mug
- Purple t-shirt with "Future Graduate of Athabasca U" text

Clothing
Technology
Fun Items
Home Decor

Fostering the Student Community
AUSU and Voice gear is intended to support your studies and help you feel like part of the AU student community. Suggestions for new items are welcome. Contact our office with any questions.

INTERNATIONAL NEWS DESK



At Home: Texting While Driving . . . Bicycles?

It's common knowledge that texting while driving is an unsafe practice, and several regions in the United States have even made it illegal. But texting while operating other modes of transportation is also a bad idea, even when the vehicle isn't motorized. As a teenage boy recently discovered, texting while bicycling has consequences—both physical and legal.

As *The Globe and Mail* [reports](#), a 16-year-old boy was charged with careless driving after allegedly texting while cycling.

Last weekend, the teen apparently collided with a parked car while simultaneously texting and riding his bike in Owen Sound, Ontario. He was thrown from his bicycle into the rear of the car, “striking and smashing the vehicle’s rear window.”

Although the boy sustained only minor injuries, he’s being hit with the careless driving charge, which previously hadn’t been applied to

texting cyclists. “This is the first time I’ve heard of somebody being so enthralled in texting that they’ve actually lost control, and weren’t watching where they’re going and hit a parked car,” police spokesperson Inspector MacKinnon told reporters.

Texting while driving, texting while biking—but what about texting while walking? According to Inspector MacKinnon, that’s not a good idea, either: “You need to . . . have your wits about you . . . because you can walk into things as well as ride into things,” MacKinnon told reporters.

In Foreign News: Plastic Sails

Plastic bottles recently floated across the ocean—but this time, it wasn’t environmentally hazardous waste. As *National Geographic* [reports](#), *Plastiki*, a sailboat composed entirely of “recycled and repurposed plastics” like water bottles, recently completed a pioneering four-month voyage across the Pacific Ocean.

The expedition, which traveled 8,000 miles between San Francisco, California and Sydney, Australia, set out to “show how smarter use of plastics can turn today’s trash into a viable, and valuable resource.”

Along the route, *Plastiki* stopped to visit several highly polluted ocean sites, including the Eastern Pacific Garbage Patch, “a swirling vortex of discarded and degrading plastics twice the size of Texas.” The expedition also noted the occurrence of floating plastic garbage “even [in] the most remote seas.”

The group hopes to highlight the increasing concern over the short- and long-term effects of oceans littered with plastic trash. By using recycled plastic to create a viable form of transportation, it also showcases the possibilities of what normally is a single-use product.

As *Plastiki* creator and expedition leader David de Rothschild told reporters, “Plastic is not the enemy,” adding that “it’s our understanding of disposal and reuse that’s to blame.”

CLASSIFIEDS

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THE VOICE

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www.voicemagazine.org

The Voice is published every Friday in html and pdf format.

Contact *The Voice* at voice@voicemagazine.org

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