

THE VOICE

MAGAZINE

Vol 19 Iss 48 2011-12-16

Giving the Gift of Time

The rewards of aid work

Art and Meaning

Inspiration by the book

E-History

Things old and new

Plus:

*From Where I Sit
Cruiscin Lan
and much more!*



CONTENTS

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

Features

This World: Students in the Jungle, Part II	3
Gregor's Bed: <i>Vexations</i> by Erik Satie	5

Columns

The Mindful Bard: <i>The Trip</i>	7
Write Stuff: All Things New (and Old)	9
From Where I Sit: Explore Your Own Backyard.....	11
Chronicles of Cruiscin Lan.....	12
AUSU Update	14

News and Events

Click of the Wrist	10
Did You Know?.....	12
International News Desk	13

From Our Readers

Letters to the Editor	2
-----------------------------	---

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.



***The Voice
Magazine***

www.voicemagazine.org

1213, 10011 109th St. NW
Edmonton AB
T5J 3S8

800.788.9041 ext. 2905

Email
voice@voicemagazine.org

Publisher

AU Students' Union

Editor-In-Chief

Tamra Ross

Managing Editor

Christina M. Frey

Regular Contributors

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

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

For weekly email reminders as each issue is posted, fill out the subscription form [here](#).

The Voice does not share its subscriber list with anyone.

© 2011 by *The Voice*

THIS WORLD

Max Birkner



Working in Africa: hard work, big rewards.

STUDENTS IN THE JUNGLE, PART II

(Read Part I of this two-part series [here](#).)

I have to keep on riding—what else can I do? In one village I stop for gas. Five elders and a few women are sitting under a thatched kitchen shelter on a bench made from the dried stems of palm branches. One of them is the Chairman of Refugees in that village.

“Bonjour, ça fait plaisir,” I say to him. I’ve been using my French a lot out here, much more than I ever did in Canada; many of the Ivorian refugees do not speak English.

But the language is where the cultural similarities stop.

During May, my first month in-country, I helped with the distribution of water tablets, buckets, and other items. The team was comprised of 10 Liberians and me, the only North American. We had been driving truckloads of supplies from a main warehouse in the town of Saclepea. The operation was constantly grinding to a halt due to vehicle breakdowns and fuel shortages; one problem with working in such rural areas is keeping a steady stream of supply and maintenance. At one point a woman came up to me near the village of Zwedru, saying her baby was sick. There was a clinic nearby that we had just resupplied, I told her. Dozens of other people came to me with questions. There were unregistered refugees in this-or-that town, when was help coming to them? It was surreal to be the 20-year-old that everyone was hanging onto for reassurance.

Aid work is very hard. No matter where you are, Africa, Asia, or the Middle East, you will be thrown into a myriad of cultural differences. In many places even the local language and village culture will be different if you drive two hours down the road. There is danger of malaria and other diseases. Very often you won’t see the benefits of the work immediately, though when you do, it is incredible. Gratitude is evident in the smiles of kids and elders who might not even speak your language. Working with the youth in a community—everyone’s back running with sweat as you dig or build in the hot sun—or meeting with local leaders to discuss projects is a life-enriching experience to which there are few equals. Then there is the matter of all the interesting food you will sample!

Aid work is very hard . . . Very often you won’t see the benefits of the work immediately, though when you do, it is incredible . . . Working with [local] youth . . . is a life-enriching experience to which there are few equals.”

Working with an aid organization is a great way to achieve a wide world view, not to mention a different perspective for the next time you watch a 10-minute infomercial on giving surgery money to the adorable, teary-eyed child who has a cleft palate.



Building a latrine foundation.

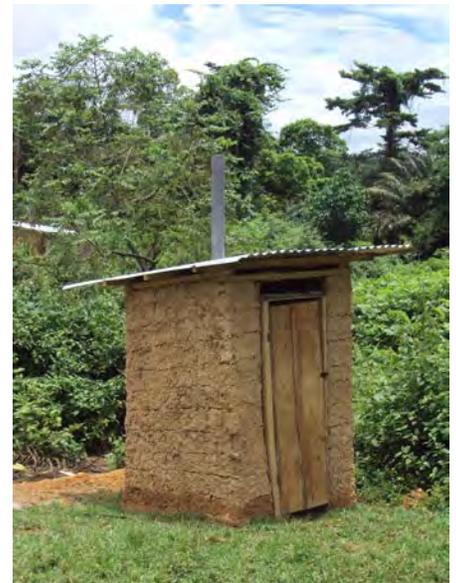
Margaret Fryer, 26, is the newly arrived Project Administrator for EQUIP. After graduating with a BA in linguistics from the University of Victoria and spending a year with a home-stay family in Yemen, she heard about the EQUIP position through a well-connected friend and knew instantly that it was right for her. “I’ve always been interested in NGO operations and seeing the effects of aid work first-hand,” she says. “This is a great chance for young people to take on responsibilities that they might not get the chance to in a Western context, since so many other people are also competing for those positions. You are thrown into things and you get to know your limits.”

For those who don’t have friends with connections like Margaret, websites like [Idealist](#), [NGOabroad](#), and [uVolunteer](#) are all great starting points for finding the organization that is best suited to your interests and areas of expertise or experience.

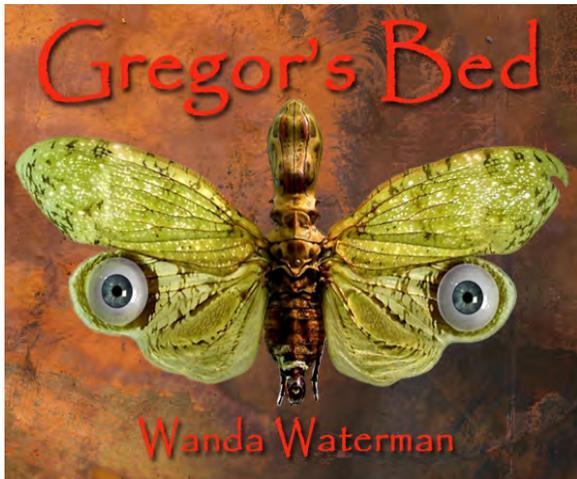
Once you’ve settled on an organization, how best to prepare yourself for the tough-but-rewarding volunteer experience? First, read up on the country you’re going to—and do it thoroughly. What is the social/economic situation (and what is the likelihood of a war breaking out while you’re there)? It is also a good idea try to get a grasp of some of the local language. This can be difficult on a continent like Africa, where many of the languages are spoken by only a small demographic and have not been put into written form. You may just have to learn when you arrive, so go with a very open mind.

It is also crucial to find out what medicines or vaccines you need—just as important as bringing a swimsuit, a strong work ethic, and a positive attitude. Finally, pack light, don’t take yourself too seriously, and invest in a good travel insurance plan. You’ll be just as thankful as I was when my hotel got broken into and everything except my toothbrush disappeared into the African night.

So how *did* I find my way out of the jungle? I asked for more directions, of course. Even Africa can feel like good old Canada once or twice a year. After riding around hopelessly for six hours I gave up on finding the work crew. Instead I asked for directions to Toweh’s Town, a name that doesn’t rhyme with 12 others in the same 20-kilometre radius. Most importantly, from Toweh Town I knew how to get out of the bush—and back onto the main road.



The finished latrine.



Recent Discoveries From the Realm of the Experimental and Avant-Garde

Album: *Vexations by Erik Satie*

Artist: Justin Saragoza, piano

“An artist must regulate his life. Here is a time-table of my daily acts.

I rise at 7.18; am inspired from 10.23 to 11.47. I lunch at 12.11 and leave the table at 12.14. A healthy ride on horse-back round my domain follows from 1.19 pm to 2.53 pm.

Another bout of inspiration from 3.12 to 4.7 pm. From 5 to 6.47 pm various occupations (fencing, reflection, immobility, visits, contemplation, dexterity, natation, etc.)

Dinner is served at 7.16 and finished at 7.20 pm. From 8.9 to 9.59 pm symphonic readings (out loud). I go to bed regularly at 10.37 pm. Once a week (on Tuesdays) I awake with a start at 3.14 am . . .”

Erik Satie

Fresh Bouts of Inspiration, by the Book

In my second year of university, my roommate was a highly-driven biology major with her sights set on medical school. She had a professor who at exam time provided his students with cassette tapes of his lectures to help them study. These cassettes contained, in addition to elucidations of roots, rhizomes, and reservoir capacity, something he included as an alleged study aid. After remarking on how difficult it sometimes was for students to create an effective study schedule, he offered a recording of a reading of the schedule of avant-garde French composer Erik Satie (quoted above).

It really did help take the edge off the seriousness of cramming.

This kind of wit also serves to take the edge off the seriousness of the creation process. Judging from his writings and activities, this was one of Satie’s main agendas. He began his career outside the realm of the ordinary, and instead of striving to be accepted, made a number of moves designed to mock and annoy those who insisted on seeing the arts not as an expression of real emotion and beauty but as a means by which elites could lord it over us poor slobs.

Satie’s teachers at the Paris Conservatoire said that he had no talent. His piano professor, Georges Mathias, remarked that Satie’s playing was “insignificant and laborious,” and Emile Descombes called him “the laziest student in the Conservatoire.”

To hear his music you’d think Satie had reacted to all this criticism by saying, “Insignificant and laborious, eh? I’ll show you insignificant and laborious!” To be fair, Mathias did say that Satie’s real talent lay in composing; however, Satie’s academic career had “loser” stamped all over it, and the aftermath was even

less glorious. Following school he was discharged from the army after one year, when he deliberately infected himself with bronchitis. And he had bad hair.

“Erik Satie . . . died in 1925, yet much of the art world . . . hasn’t yet caught up with the advances he made in the field of composition.”

I’ve wanted to write about Satie for a while. He died in 1925, yet much of the art world, including art consumers, hasn’t yet caught up with the advances he made in the field of composition. But then the whole idea of the avant-garde as something “new” is a mistake; the avant-garde challenges conventional forms, but newly emerging art is no more likely to do that than the art of the past. Much of what’s coming out today is simply old conventions in new packages—it may still be art, but it’s just not avant-garde.

An indispensable part of the Satie package is his sardonic wit and his refusal to take himself or the artistic process seriously. This is refreshing and is something that resonates with the creative personality, which tends to see the self as an outsider even while struggling up the ladder of accomplishment and acceptance.

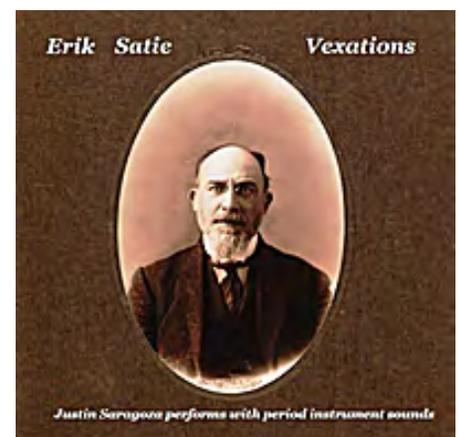
Hearing Saragoza’s performance is like hearing someone talking in his sleep or like watching one of those French films in which tension builds but nothing ever happens. The fact that Saragoza plays it on a period instrument—an 1897 Steinway that lacks the resonance of modern pianos—adds to the wooden quality of the single notes and doesn’t shellac any of the chordal dissonance.

Saragoza brings a focus and mindfulness to *Vexations*, exaggerating its halting quality, and his style of playing is of more forthright than tender. While it may sound like a child plunking out tunes on Grandmama’s piano, this is of course misleading; here is no improvisation here, and freedom of interpretation is somewhat limited by the intellectual rigour of the composition.

The piece is aptly named. You might even feel, as I did, slightly vexed while listening. But is vexation an emotional state which music should attempt to preclude? After all, wasn’t the unlistenable quality of punk rock part of a package that challenged prevailing escapism in music at a time when people really just needed to wake up?

“The tradition . . . of attempting a performance of the work with 840 repetitions comes from the initial performance given by John Cage and his associates, but the score does not dictate such a performance. Satie instructs that “In order to play the theme 840 times in succession...” implying that if one wishes to do this, performers should prepare themselves in a particular way (in the deep silence, by serious immobilities). But Satie does not mandate 840 repetitions of the theme and would appear instead to allow a choice of how much time a performer wishes to spend on the little composition, perhaps appreciating a marathon performance should one choose to do so.”

Justin Saragoza



THE MINDFUL BARD

Wanda Waterman



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

"The moon doth with delight

Look round her when the heavens are bare;

Waters on a starry night

Are beautiful and fair;

The sunshine is a glorious birth;

But yet I know, where'er I go,

That there hath pass'd away a glory from the earth."

William Wordsworth, "Ode: Intimations of Immortality from Recollections of Early Childhood"

Intimations of Immortality on a Mid-life Crisis Road Trip

Film: *The Trip* (IFC Films 2010)

Director: Michael Winterbottom

Cast: Steve Coogan, Rob Brydon

Why does Steve Coogan so often play himself as this actor who clings to the same stupid agenda even though it makes him miserable and he's always landing on his face? Because it's hilarious, that's why.

There's a great scene in *Coffee and Cigarettes* in which Alfred Molina and Steve Coogan are having coffee together in a café. Alfred tells Steve that he's discovered that they're related. Molina is terribly excited about this, and shows Coogan how he's traced their lineage back to Italy. Coogan is noticeably uncomfortable.

Molina, blissfully unaware of Coogan's uppity revulsion, thinks their family history would make a great film project and suggests they stay in touch to discuss it further. Steve is politely dismissive, making enough weak excuses for not giving Molina his number that Molina finally gets the picture—just as he gets a call from Spike Jonze.

The ever-ambitious Coogan sits up with a start and immediately starts sucking up to Molina, who suddenly mirrors Coogan's earlier condescension. As Molina rises from his chair, Coogan obsequiously calls out, "I'll pay for the coffee!" To which Molina replies abruptly, "Yes, you will," and walks out.

It's the same kind of character Coogan plays in *The Trip*, a Chaucerian morality tale showing up the follies and hypocrisies of the modern playboy career actor. The road trip is essentially an assignment for Coogan

to write about upscale restaurants. The drive is through the rugged splendour of northern England, with all the fabulous scenes we've come to expect—and with running commentary by Coogan and Brydon on the geology, history, and poetry of this beautiful region. This is interspersed with some pretty funny scenes in fancy restaurants; the two men obviously know next to nothing about food, and enjoy aping their favourite actors and pointing out each other's weaknesses in presentation.

Even more hilarious are the scenes in which the decidedly non-foodie Brydon can't bring himself to sample this or that culinary delight, simply because it's unfamiliar.

Humour aside, though, *The Trip* saliently presents the problems of the artistic personality, offering a choice between two modes of being: obedience to the dictates of one's art, whatever that means, or obedience to a higher ethics (which involves a loving sense of humility and a decision to not take oneself seriously).

The Trip offers many insights into things that can distract the artist—in this case, an actor—from the downward personal and relational spiral that accompanies excessive self-absorption.

In the quest for well-being Coogan is often tempted to indulge his burgeoning ego by plying it with brief sexual liaisons. Artists are supposed to do that, right? Addictions add to the artist's mystique, and may even aid creativity, right?

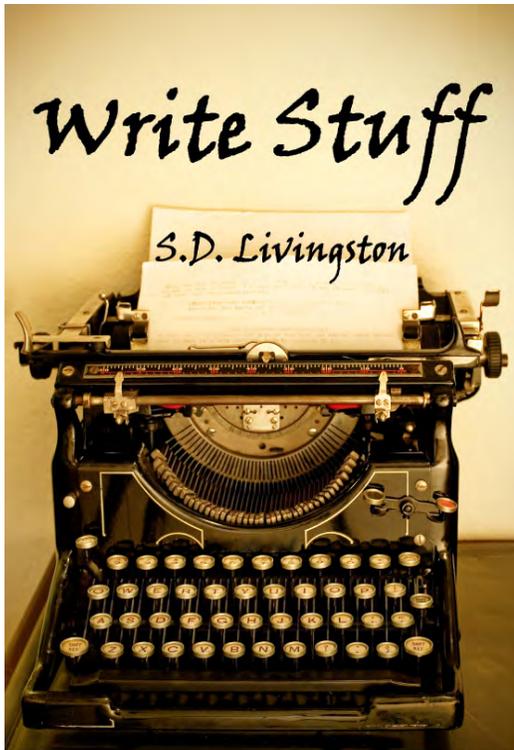
Plying the ego with addictions is not a necessary part of the artistic experience, or even a good one: "This road [is] at its best egotistical and arrogant and at its worst either cutthroat or self-destructive."

Wrong. This road—at its best egotistical and arrogant and at its worst either cutthroat or self-destructive—is not, contrary to prevailing opinion, an inherent necessity of art. Sadly there isn't enough evidence that addictions *harm* the creative process (witness the womanizing Picasso), but there's also little real evidence that they help it (witness John Coltrane's post-drug creative output).

Rob Brydon's attachment to his family and his tenderness for others and reluctance to use them for his own ends is the perfect antithesis to Coogan's absurd egotism.

The Trip fulfills six of the Mindful Bard's criteria for films well worth seeing: 1) it is authentic, original, and delightful; 2) it poses and admirably responds to questions that have a direct bearing on my view of existence; 3) it provides respite from a sick and cruel world, a respite enabling me to renew myself for a return to mindful artistic endeavour; 4) it is about attainment of the true self; 5) it inspires an awareness of the sanctity of creation; and 6) it makes me appreciate that life is a complex and rare phenomenon, 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.



All Things New (and Old)

'Tis the season for all things new: new-fallen snow, new mittens, and new books for the people on your holiday list. But in the midst of all that newness, you might want to treat yourself to something old: one of the incredibly rich archives of books, newspapers, and films to be discovered online.

First up is British Pathé, an [online archive](#) of “90,000 videos covering newsreel, sports footage, social history documentaries, entertainment and music stories from 1896 to 1976.” One of the nice features of this collection is that the newsreels were professionally produced by British Pathé (the company began in the 1890s), and the sound and image quality is well-preserved.

Not only can you watch Paul McCartney and Linda Eastman leave their wedding ceremony, but you can also see footage of the FBI cracking the Sinatra kidnapping case, and view a 1952 film clip of Iraq’s newly discovered oil fields. The site groups its

fascinating footage into categories, including Fashion and Music, War and Revolution, Sports and Leisure, and Historical Figures. If you’ve got plenty of web surfing time over the holidays, this site is well worth checking out.

If you prefer books over film, you can’t beat [Project Gutenberg](#). It’s widely known, but for the uninitiated, here’s the scoop: Project Gutenberg “is the first and largest single collection of free electronic books,” and all titles have passed into the public domain. With more than 36,000 e-books available, there’s something for every reader, and the Top 100 list includes many genres—from Mark Twain’s *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* to Henrik Ibsen’s play *A Doll’s House*.

And for Canadian students, the [Project Gutenberg Canada](#) site offers some great finds that could be useful for your next Canadian history essay.

For magazine buffs, *Time* has an [online archive](#) that will keep you busy for days. You can search through articles and covers dating back to 1923, and *Time* has also created a set of collections based on popular categories, subjects, and people. The articles are interesting, but it’s equally telling to search for covers by year. The changing artistic styles alone offer a fascinating view of different eras.

If you want a blast from Canada’s collective past, the [CBC digital archives](#) should make you happy. The main CBC archives hold “more than seven decades of CBC radio and television history . . . in millions of discs, films, tapes, photographs, paper records and electronic databases.” Though not every film and audio clip can be included on the website, it gives a good idea of the collection’s richness.

You’ll find Garrison Keillor talking about ghosts on *Writers & Company*; video clips from *Front Page Challenge*, discussing Canada’s PoW camps in northern Ontario; and a fascinating discussion, from 1945, on women’s roles in the new post-war workplace. And that’s barely scratching the surface.

So as December pulls us toward finding, wrapping, and exclaiming over new and glittering things, take some time to explore the old. You just might find some unexpected gifts waiting for you there.

S.D. Livingston is the author of several books, including the new suspense novel Kings of Providence. Visit her [website](#) for information on her writing (and for more musings on the literary world!).

CLICK OF THE WRIST

Come Fly with Me

Travelling over the holidays? Whether you'll be spending a week snuggling up at a ski lodge or sunning on the beach, chances are you're dreading the crazy nightmare of air travel during the busiest season. Check out these links for tips for a smoother flight—or for entertainment should you experience an unwelcome delay.

Smooth Sailing

For help in avoiding the holiday hassle, read these 10 travel tips from Cheapflights.ca. You might save time and money—and a few headaches, too!

Stay Calm

There's a lot about air travel that can put even the most zen person out of sorts. These suggestions give antsy travellers a reality check (and a reminder that we bring a lot of the stress of flying with us to the airport!).

Yogi Traveller

Yoga can help you keep your cool at the airport—and stay comfortable in the notoriously stiff seats once you're on board. The free mini-version of *Airplane Yoga* includes a couple poses, or you can upgrade to a more detailed version in PDF, Kindle, and more formats (one even includes audio instructions).

Awesome Airports

Are you travelling to any of these airports this holiday? *National Geographic Traveler* gives its picks for the best and the coolest of waiting area amenities.

Sea to Sky

Instead of relaxing in a uniquely constructed airport, maybe you'll be connecting in some tiny place with zero amenities. Rather than playing yet another round of Angry Birds, pass the time by checking out these extreme airports—places where the runway meets nature, and the latter's the clear winner.





*From
Where
I Sit*

Hazel Anaka

Explore Your Own Backyard

In the past few days, I've begun work on a 2012 tourism guide that covers part of east-central Alberta. My role is multi-faceted.

First, I edit the information people submit about their communities. There are the basics, like population, location, and contact info, and additional categories for attractions, history, and outdoors. The guide covers a wide range of places: from hamlets with a handful of residents to a city with more than 15,000 people. The attractions section includes everything from Andrew's world's largest mallard to Fort Saskatchewan's state-of-the-art recreation complex.

The challenge for the publishers and me is to make the information fresh, user-friendly, and proportionate to the amount of ad space sold. The challenge for those submitting the information is to capture the essence of their community and gather event information for up to a year in advance.

The second duty I have is making sense of the hundreds of listings submitted to the events calendar. Individual listings need to include the when, where, and what of the event. Then they are set in a chronological master list that covers March to December. With plans for a bigger, better, and searchable online guide, that listing will be expanded to include contact information and a short

description. The amount of work could make a grown woman cry.

In each issue of the guide, a person of historic or cultural significance is profiled. My third task is to do the interview and write the article. I'm trying to schedule that now so I can spread out my workload.

The guide also includes listings for Farmers' Markets, campgrounds, golf courses, and accommodations. An expanded section on culinary tourism is in the works. More people are now interested in where their food is coming from, how it is prepared, and how they can shorten the distance from farm to fork.

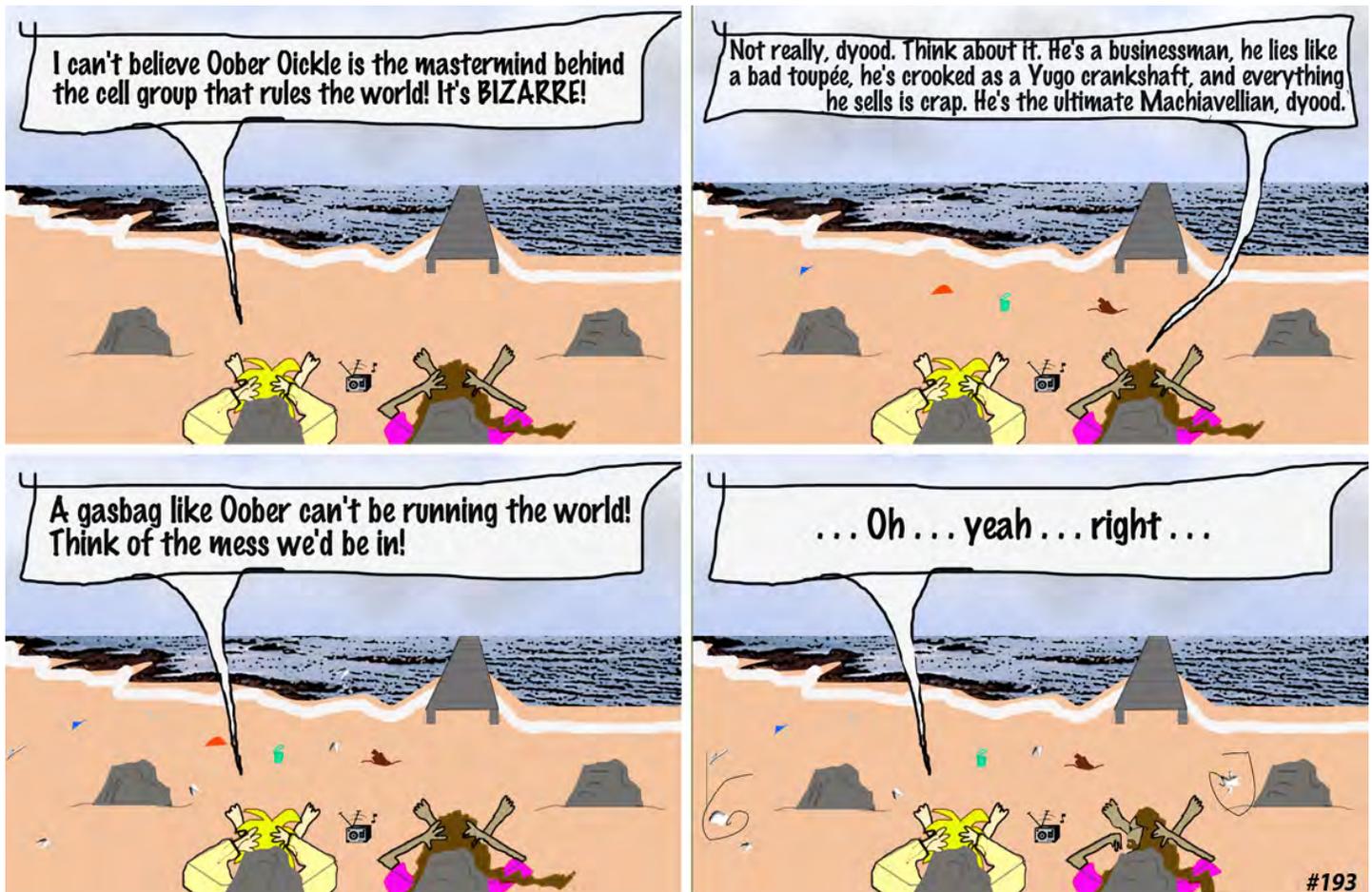
So why should any of this matter to you?

I believe most people turn to either print or online publications like this guide when planning day excursions or longer getaways. It's interesting to discover what goes on behind the scenes to bring a publication of this sort to print—not to mention the long lead time that's required to get the work done and the book in the hands of people at the right time. Understand that there is a small army of people gathering, submitting, editing, and presenting the information in a useable way.

More importantly, all of us come from somewhere. Whether we live in a hamlet or a big city, someone is charged with the duty of spreading the word about the community. The tourism and promotion budget may range from just good intentions to millions of dollars. As individuals we have the power to spread the word about what makes our home area attractive and worthy of a visit. We can support those brave entrepreneurs who invest in tourism businesses. We can thank the selfless volunteers who make special events happen on a shoestring. Exploring our own backyards is smart, from where I sit.

CHRONICLES OF CRUISCIN LAN

Wanda Waterman

**DID YOU KNOW?****AU Holiday Exam Procedures**

If you have undergraduate courses ending December 31, 2011, you'll want to note the University's special holiday exam procedures—and order your final examinations as soon as possible.

If your course contract date is December 31, you must submit your exam requests before the University closes for the holidays. Athabasca University will be closed from December 23, 2011, at 5 pm MST until January 3, 2012, at 8:30 am MST. No examinations will be shipped during that period.

Exam requests received after the close of business on December 23 will be treated as Late Examination Requests, and the Late Examination Request Fee will be assessed.

Due to the holiday postal rush, the University may not be able to guarantee specific write dates. However, if you submit your exam request before the holiday closure, you will have until January 15, 2012, to take your exam. Note that this is not a course extension; all other course components, including essays, projects, and quizzes, are due by the December 31 course contract date.

For further information, check out the holiday exam policy [here](#), or contact the Information Centre at 1.800.788.9041.

INTERNATIONAL NEWS DESK



At Home: Indebted

Christmas is around the corner, and the holiday shoppers are packing the malls in search of the perfect gift. Yet underneath all the tinsel and trimmings is an ugly truth: the bill, which will come due in January. In fact, Canadians are falling further and further into debt—and financial analysts are alarmed at the trend.

As *The Globe and Mail* [reports](#), “Canadians have set a new record for household debt.” Debt levels are up significantly from just three months ago, and Canadian households have even “surpassed levels of both the United States and the United Kingdom.”

It’s not just overspending that’s the problem: “falling real wages and job creation that has stalled, on top of tumbling stock prices and a drop in the value of pension assets” are contributing to the increase.

Economists are worried that households are now at much higher risk in the event of a “sudden negative event” like “falling house prices or rising interest rates.” In a broader sense, economic growth could be inhibited across the country.

Bank of Canada Governor Mark Carney pointed out that nearly a tenth of Canadians have precarious financial positions, telling reporters that “[our] greatest domestic risk relates to household finances.”

Around the World: Back from the Dead

Kangaroo care: it’s a term for skin-to-skin contact with premature newborns (the name is borrowed from the kangaroo’s practice of keeping its baby safe and close). For one Australian mom, it took on a new meaning when it brought her languishing son back to life.

As the *Today* show [reports](#), Kate Ogg’s 27-week premature son Jamie was pronounced dead “after efforts to resuscitate [him] had failed.”

Medical staff gave the parents “the chance to say goodbye,” and placed the baby “across Kate’s bare chest.”

Instead, after a few minutes, the newborn started to move, eventually opening his eyes. At first the doctors were skeptical, thinking the Oggs were having difficulty “reconciling themselves” to the loss. As Jamie grew more responsive—grabbing a finger and tasting breast milk—medical staff realized the shocking truth. “[The doctor] said, “I don’t believe it, I don’t believe it,”” dad David Ogg told reporters.

AUSU UPDATE

Bethany Tynes, President



AUSU congratulates new party leaders!

AU students are spread all over Canada and the world, but AU's funding comes from the Government of Alberta, so it's important for us, as AU students, to remain aware of political issues in Alberta. Alberta's political parties have recently undergone some transitions, as both the Progressive Conservative and Liberal parties recently elected new leaders: Dr. Raj Sherman will now head up the Liberal party, while Alison Redford has been selected to lead the Progressive Conservatives. Redford was sworn in as Premier of Alberta on Friday, October 7. AUSU would like to thank all those who participated in the leadership races, and congratulate Sherman and Redford on their wins.

Councillors training to serve you better

All eight current AUSU councillors, as well as our two full-time student service staff, are currently involved in a Certified Student Leader training program through the National Centre for Student Leadership. This training covers critical issues such as successful communication, strategic planning, and conflict resolution, which we hope will better equip us to work productively together to serve the needs of our student members.

Increased student representation at AU

At most Alberta universities, two of the highest decision-making bodies are the Board of Governors, which provides strategic direction, and the General Faculties Council, which deals with academic matters. At AU, meanwhile, there has always been a Governing Council and an Academic Council—until recently! The Alberta Minister of Advanced Education and Technology has amended the Athabasca University regulations, moving AU closer into line with other Alberta universities. AU's Governing Council has now been replaced by a Board of Governors, and while this is mostly a change in nomenclature, the transformation as AU moves from an Academic Council (AUAC) to a General Faculties Council (AUGFC) will be more noticeable. AUSU is particularly pleased that undergraduate students at AU will now have two seats on AUGFC, as opposed to only one on AUAC. There will also be a reserved space on the GFC Executive Committee for an undergraduate student representative. This is great news, and will allow us, as undergraduate students, to ensure that our voice is heard within this important decision-making body at AU!

What are your course materials preferences?

AU is currently re-examining their course materials model. Currently, the cost of all undergraduate courses includes access to the necessary textbooks, and these are usually mailed directly to your door. This is convenient for many students, but many others have asked for the opportunity to look for bargains elsewhere, or to buy and sell used textbooks. What about you? How do you feel about the course materials system at AU? AU is asking students for their opinion! The question currently being posed to students is as follows:

In response to student feedback, AU is considering changing the way in which students access or receive their learning resources. Currently, all the learning resources costs are covered through tuition fees and the learning resources fee. These costs include textbooks, printed materials, access to the LMS and other digital resources, copyright fees for third party materials, and the administrative costs associated with the production of such

materials. For items that a student could purchase directly from a source other than AU (e.g., books, e-books), which of the following options would you prefer?

- To purchase materials directly from a non-Athabasca University source such as Amazon
- To have the choice to purchase course materials from either AU or a different source such as Amazon
- To purchase course materials from AU but have the learning resources fee reflect the actual cost of the materials for the particular course (for example, if the learning resources in Course A cost \$100, then the learning resources fee would be \$100)
- The status quo (a fixed learning services fee per course –currently about \$170)

Email us your thoughts and we'll make sure that they're voiced in the appropriate committee!

AU honorary doctorates

Did you know that AU bestows honorary doctorates each year at Convocation? Do you have an idea for someone you'd like to see honoured by the university? Candidates should "have distinguished themselves in education, science, the arts, public service, or other areas, and have made significant life-long contributions to endeavours consistent with the mandate and purpose of Athabasca University." AUSU has a seat on the committee that nominates and selects the recipients of honorary doctorates, so to have your voice heard, drop us an email with your thoughts!

Have you heard . . .

. . . that we still have some of our awesome 2011 AUSU Handbook/Planners available? Some of the information in these little books is priceless when it comes to helping AU students navigate the university and our services—but they're free for you, just for being an AUSU member! We even mail them right to your door. All you have to do is ask!

. . . about our SmartDraw program? We've been arranging for a licence for our students to use this software for the last few years. It lets you create detailed charts and insert them into your assignments (even ones you submit as Word or PDF documents). The company has warned us, though, that there will be a massive price increase next year, so we want to know if our students feel that the software is a help to them, or if they'd rather have us look into other options. Get your copy today, and let us know what you think.

. . . there's a new AUSU website on the way? We want our site to provide dynamic content and updates so that it's a place that you, as an AU student, WANT to visit regularly! If you have suggestions on content you'd like to see on our website, please get in touch with us to share your ideas.

. . . AUSU has scholarships, awards, and bursaries for our student members? The next major awards deadline is November 1, but some bursaries are also available year-round. Make sure you check our site for more information!

Get in touch with us

Have comments or questions about AUSU or anything in this column? Feel free to get in touch with AUSU President Bethany at president@ausu.org. You can also email our office at ausu@ausu.org or call 1.800.788.9041 ext. 3413. We'd love to hear from you!

This column is provided by AUSU to facilitate communication with its members. The Voice does not write or edit this section; all content has been exclusively and directly provided by AUSU, and any questions or comments about the material should be directed to ausu@ausu.org.

CLASSIFIEDS

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

THE VOICE

1213, 10011 109th St. NW, Edmonton, AB T5J 3S8 - Ph: 800.788.9041 ext. 2905 - Fax: 780.497.7003 attn: Voice Editor

Publisher Athabasca University Students' Union
Editor-In-Chief Tamra Ross
Managing Editor Christina M. Frey

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

www.voicemagazine.org

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

Contact *The Voice* at voice@voicemagazine.org.

To receive a weekly email announcing each issue, subscribe [here](#). *The Voice* does not share its subscriber list.