

THE VOICE

MAGAZINE
Vol 20 Iss 06 2012-02-10

Banned Booze

Prohibition's effects

War of Words

Authors on attack

Chocophile

Chocolate and health

*Plus:
In Conversation With
From Where I Sit
and much more!*



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***The Voice
Magazine***

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

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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.



LOVE LETTER

Maxie van Roye



Valentine's Day is around the corner. And although stores are urging us to purchase expensive treats for our loved ones, sometimes a simple note suffices. If nothing else, February 14 is a great time to shower some special attention on the relationships in our lives—particularly if we've been neglecting them. I've got one that's way overdue:

My dear,

Do you know how much you mean to me?

I know we had a rocky start. I'm not sure I ever said how sorry I was. How I regret the way I did things. Please understand that though once we'd met I'd only wanted you, I kept struggling with feelings for my old love. There wasn't anything between us, not like with you and me. I didn't want to be with him. Not after what he put me through.

Not after I'd met you. How could he compare?

But it was hard to rid myself of that shared history. He used it against me, trying to hold me against my will. I was weak. I hurt you. I'm truly sorry, sorrier than you'll ever know. Please know that my heart was with you the whole time. That I desperately wanted to break with him forever, for him to be completely out of my life.

And be assured: it's over. I will not be going back. That is in the past, and I'm going to leave it there. Forever. Now is the time for us.

Now I need to tell you how I feel about you.

Every morning I wake up and see you and my heart skips a beat. I love you. I can't wait to spend the day with you.

We work so well together, so in synch. You get me. You know what I want almost before I ask for it. You finish my sentences. You let me be me. No judgment. No control. No angry outbursts, no sulking. No manipulation.

You free me like I've never been freed before.

And yet you're not afraid to give gentle, even hesitant correction. You look out for my well being, but you're not there to flatter, you're also there to support. Even when it means keeping me from making a big mistake.

Especially when it means keeping me from making a big mistake.

Is it silly to say that I miss you while I'm away from you? I miss your warmth, your presence close to me. The soft sound of your breath, each moment ticking away a moment full of faithfulness. You've brought me through crisis after crisis. You've seen me jubilant, exhausted, sick, frustrated, angry, hurt, crying.

Through it all, you've had my back. I know I can count on you. You haven't let me down. You're a rock, something firm in this insanity we call life.

I want you to know that I love you. You've changed my life and you're helping me become a better, more hopeful, more helpful person. You've moved me in a way I'd never before imagined.

I look forward to our shared future. I can't wait for each new day that we spend together. I can't wait to see the road we'll travel.

With a bond like ours, the possibilities are unimaginable. There's a whole universe out there waiting for us to conquer it. Together, we can do anything.

My dear laptop: I love you. Happy Valentine's Day.

Maxie

CHRONICLES OF CRUISCIN LAN

Wanda Waterman



IN CONVERSATION WITH . . .

Wanda Waterman



Above: the cast of *Blackstone*. Justin Rain is in the centre with Ashley Callingbull, who plays his onscreen love Sheila.

Blackstone, Part IV**Justin Rain: On Playing Alan Fraser, Part II**

Blackstone is a Gemini award-winning Canadian television series based on a fictitious Canadian First Nations reserve. The second season is now airing on the Aboriginal People's Television Network (APTN) and features some of the finest aboriginal talent in North America.

Cast member Justin Rain studied acting at the Vancouver Academy of Dramatic Arts after spending several years working with the East Vancouver Urban Native Theatre

Company. He's had many roles on the stage and in film, including *Ayaa: A Hero's Journey*, *Journeying Fourth*, *Dance of My Beating Heart*, and *The Twilight Saga: Eclipse*, and received the Best Actor award at the 2010 Winnipeg Aboriginal Film Festival. Recently Justin took the time to answer some of Wanda Waterman's questions about creativity, positive influences, and his coming film, *Solace*. Read Part I of Justin's interview [here](#).

Bad Company

Justin Rain attributes the downward spiral of his early youth to his social context at the time. He now affirms the importance of good companions: "In order to keep on being creative I need to surround myself with positive people. Now I make sure the people around me are positive and constructive people, and that makes all the difference."

According to Justin, the idea that real artists are either haggard drug abusers or mentally ill is a thing of the past.

"I don't know any real artists," he says, "who are true to the work they love that aren't healthy, happy people. I can't speak for everyone when I say that, but most of the successful artists I know are doing what they love."

The *Blackstone* residents continue to struggle with external problems (reserve politics, family problems, and bad business deals) and internal demons (addiction and inner turmoil). Moral compromises are the soup du jour; Justin's character, Alan Fraser, has begun tending the bar at his uncle's strip club (the pay is just too good to pass up). This not only leaves Alan wide open to all the temptations the lords of darkness have to offer, it understandably upsets his girlfriend, Sheila, causing a rift between them.

Alan's decision to accept work at the club is just one of many ethical dilemmas created in a climate of moral weakness born of intense suffering and a lack of opportunity. Chief Andy's "talks" with his dead father show this up on a regular basis, the ghost calling for a heroic refusal to compromise the First Nations moral code:

"A nation must be embraced, rehabilitated and expressed as a tangible sign of human creativity and as an integral element of mankind's heritage."

Abdelaziz Bouteflika

GHOST [OF ANDY'S DAD]: If you wanna know what's wrong with our people, take a look at their garbage. We've become a culture of convenience.

ANDY: Welcome to the 21st century, Dad. Wish you were here.

GHOST: You call this progress? It's a failure. Can you not see that?

ANDY: People are free to do what they want. It's their right.

GHOST: Freedom is not a right, you fool—it's a legacy. We fought for this! You think the fight is over yet? We ask for respect and we don't even respect ourselves. We say, "Walk in peace" and we do the opposite.

Justin is one of many First Nations people actively striving to turn this state of affairs around. He's chosen to focus on teaching and mentoring the young.

"I designed a youth project called *The Artist Inside*; the slogan is 'Speak with your heart—speak with your art.' I ask teenagers what that slogan means to them. If you're expressing yourself creatively through your art, then you're an artist. If we're not expressing our feelings through something positive, we're usually expressing them through something negative—like getting into trouble, getting into fights, getting arrested.

"One of the questions I like to ask when I go to schools is, *Who are the fighters here?* There's always a small group of people who fight. Some of them talk about it and some of them don't. I say, if you want to express aggression why not train yourself to be an ultimate fighter and get paid for it instead of getting charged with assault?

"When I talk to high schools I'm in the gymnasium or the auditorium and there's not a lot of 'art' around. I ask the kids to point out a piece of art, and I tell them that it's all around us. Sometimes they can't, so I tell them that at one point someone sat down with a pencil and a piece of paper and drew this building, and now this building is a reality and we're inside it.



Above: Justin Rain (actor). Photo: Dean Buscher.

“When I hear the word ‘artist’ I automatically think ‘paintbrush,’ but it doesn’t have to be that way. There’s artistry in a person who’s pursuing answers—they’re creating, they’re provoking their creative intuition to solve problems, like a defence lawyer who has to try to help someone avoid jail. There’s a mathematical equation you have to figure out in order to do those things.”

Being an artist isn't limited to traditional notions of painters, actors, and poets, says actor Justin Rain: "There's artistry in a person who's pursuing answers—they're creating, they're provoking their creative intuition to solve problems . . ."

On *Solace*

Justin sees creative art as not only a means to avoid self-destruction but also as one of the most effective ways of dealing with personal pain. “Acting has turned out to be a very therapeutic thing for me,” he says. “I think of all my creative pursuits acting is the most rewarding.”

He’s now channelling his own hurt into a short film, *Solace*, now in pre-production. He wrote the script himself and will both star in and direct the film.

“It’s kind of a tragic romance,” he says. “I express my real life experiences through my art. I had broken up with someone I was with for a while, and there’s still pain lingering from that—I just wanted to get it out. I’m really looking forward to filming it, and the team that I’m getting together is great. They know what they’re doing and have the confidence that this little film is going to shout out.”

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.

DID YOU KNOW?

Project Gutenberg Canada



You’re probably aware of Project Gutenberg, an online resource which provides free access to literary works that have passed into the public domain.

But did you know that there’s a Canadian equivalent, Project Gutenberg Canada?

The mission of Project Gutenberg Canada is to make freely available Canadian-specific content that is in the public domain. In addition to fiction works by Canadian writers and “non-fiction books on Canadian history, politics, and culture,” the online resource offers international material that is considered public domain in Canada. And it won’t be limited to Canada’s official languages; you’ll find works “in any language, as is appropriate for a country with Canada’s multicultural makeup.”

In the future, Project Gutenberg plans to “launch a series of original translations” to add accessibility to its collections.

HEALTH MATTERS

Katie D'Souza

**Chocophile**

With Valentine's Day just around the corner, store displays are stacked high with the treats that seem to be synonymous with the season: cinnamon hearts, romantic conversation candies, and, of course, chocolate. Not too healthy—or is it?

You may be in for a (pleasant) surprise. Although there's certainly no health factor in red-dyed, artificially flavoured candies formed from a chemical cocktail, chocolate is a different story.

Where in the world . . . ?

Chocolate has natural origins in the fruit of the tropical cacao (pronounced "ca-KOW") tree, *Theobroma cacao*. Primarily grown in Africa, Central and South America, and other tropical regions, the cacao tree yields a fruit pod whose seeds are the source of chocolate. Although the seeds are incredibly bitter when eaten in their raw, unprocessed state—hardly the Valentine's Day snack you're thinking about—some natural treatment changes that. Fermentation under banana leaves and a week of sun-drying renders the seeds (now called "beans") into something more "chocolatey" in flavour.

The final processing is completed in factories, where sugar or other ingredients are added, depending on the type of chocolate.

Why is it good?

If it's frequently factory-processed, why is chocolate considered healthy?

First, chocolate contains very high levels of flavonoids, compounds that act as antioxidants. In fact, dark chocolate has flavonoid levels up to eight times higher than those found in strawberries! Antioxidants protect against cellular damage, which means reduced toll on the body's overall physiology. In other words, you'll feel better and more energetic and have improved cardiovascular function. Plus, antioxidants have great anti-aging benefits.

In addition to flavonoids, cacao also contains serotonin, a neurotransmitter that's important in maintaining a positive mood; perhaps that's why chocolate is often seen as an aphrodisiac. Additionally, serotonin is converted to melatonin at night and promotes healthy sleep.

Before you go shopping . . .

Unfortunately, not all chocolate is created equal. For chocolate to have any health benefit, it has to be "real," made from natural chocolate itself—artificially flavoured "chocolate" won't do it. This kind is easy to tell because it usually tastes waxy or chewy.

Milk chocolate does possess some of the health benefits of chocolate, but it's not the top choice because the other ingredients (like milk and sugar) dilute the concentration of the natural chocolate and therefore its benefits. Additionally, the high sugar levels are problematic.

Chocolate has health benefits, but take note: not all supermarket chocolate is healthy thanks to the additives it contains. Look out for artificial chocolate, which has a waxy taste. Milk chocolate is better, but the benefits are diluted by the milk and sugar. The winner: dark chocolate!

Of course, consuming the pure cacao beans is the best option, but these can be costly and difficult to locate. For most of us, dark chocolate is the winner; it's the most unrefined and usually has the fewest added ingredients, resulting in the highest concentration of pure cacao. You can often see the concentration written on the package when you're comparing chocolate at the store. If you're not keen on the 80 per cent dark chocolate (it can be pretty bitter!), then why not opt for a lower percentage, like 65 per cent? It will still give you an antioxidant punch, but avoid some of the problems of milk chocolate and artificial chocolate.

And how much?

You don't need to consume the whole bar; one square of dark chocolate daily is a good way to gain its benefits. Remember, too, that it's not a quick fix. Like most things, the health benefits of consuming chocolate occur over time.

This Valentine's Day, start a heart-healthy habit with a small piece of chocolate—and keep it up for the rest of the year!

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

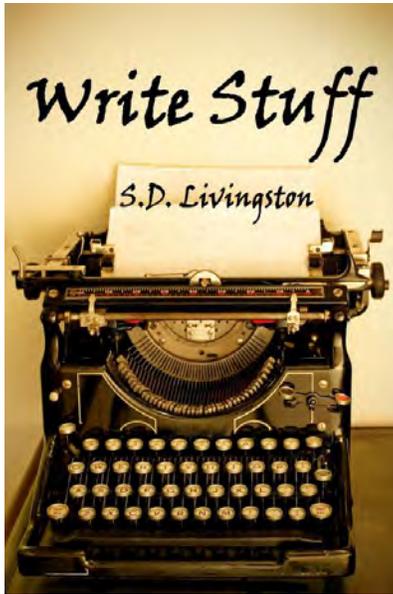
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20 YEARS OF NEWS AND VIEWS

Did you know that *The Voice* has sported a cover for less than a decade? In 2002, *The Voice* moved from a newspaper-style layout (with no cover) to a simple cover with a weekly quote. The following year a standard cover was created, featuring the *Voice* logo and original artwork by former *Voice* editor Tammy Moore.

The style you see now, or something very similar, debuted in the [January 4, 2008 issue](#).

Before *The Voice* had a cover, there were a number of varying newspaper-style formats. To see how *The Voice* has changed in appearance, check out our archived web-format issues [here](#) (beginning with issue 1001, in January 2002), and our archived PDF-format issues [here](#) (beginning with issue 901, in January 2001).



War of Words

Of all the literary contests and book clubs out there, nothing sounds quite so benign as “Canada Reads.” From the title alone you can tell it involves Canadians, a famously polite bunch, and reading, a notably non-violent pastime. So what the heck happened when a Canada Reads judge started accusing authors of being “bloody terrorists” and liars? The truth about literature’s hidden dark side turned, roaring, into a very public fray.

The ruckus started during a recent episode of the CBC’s popular literary contest, Canada Reads. The premise is that several well-known Canadians defend the merits of their chosen books, and one title is knocked out of the contest each day until a winner is declared. It’s generally a civil event, with participants taking (and giving) good-natured literary barbs.

For this year’s contest, all the nominated titles are non-fiction books—things like *The Game*, by Ken Dryden, and *Prisoner of Tehran*, by Marina Nemat. So it’s understandable that there might be a little more intensity surrounding discussions about war and politics than, say, chick lit. But when Anne-France Goldwater, a Quebec lawyer and TV host, declared that author “Carmen Aguirre is a bloody terrorist,” it sank the tone to a new and unpleasant level. (She was referring to the Vancouver-based Aguirre’s memoir, *Something Fierce*, about growing up within the Chilean resistance movement.)

Goldwater also went on the attack about the memoir *Prisoner of Tehran*, which discusses author Nemat’s arrest and imprisonment in Iran at the age of 16. As the *Globe and Mail* writes, Goldwater claimed that Nemat “tells a story that’s not true and you can tell it’s not true when you read it.”

Startling allegations, to be sure, and not the usual stuff of Canada Reads. But literature, far from inspiring nothing more than imaginary adventures, has a history rife with real-life feuds and fisticuffs. Indeed, as The Daily Beast site notes, “The greatest literary feuds begin as a response to words, preferably written ones.”

Sometimes the battles are confined to the written word, like when Harold Bloom slammed J.K. Rowling’s prose. In a *Wall Street Journal Piece* in 2000, Bloom called her writing “heavy on cliché,” and wondered whether “more than 35 million book buyers, and their offspring” could be wrong. He answered his own question with a resounding yes, and said they’ll continue to be wrong “for as long as they persevere with Potter.” Apparently, the millions of faithful *Potter* readers missed his review.

Other times, things get decidedly physical; the confrontation between Gore Vidal and Normal Mailer has become the stuff of legend. The story goes like this: besides insulting a book of Mailer’s, Vidal compared him to Charles Manson. In reply, Mailer “head-butted him in the green room of the Dick Cavett Show in 1971,” and several years later tossed a drink—and a punch—at him during a party. But proving that words really are mightier than the sword, Vidal struck back with the perfect response: “As usual, words fail him.”

And then there was the 2004 spat between Richard Ford and Colson Whitehead, one in which Ford quite literally spat on Whitehead for giving a poor review of Ford's *Multitude of Sins*. Ford replied in style in *The New York Times*, writing that it "wasn't the first time some old coot had drooled on me, and it probably won't be the last."

So should Anne-France Goldwater's comments on Canada Reads pass unremarked? No, if only because they lowered the discourse of a national broadcaster's program to the juvenile, inflammatory level of the worst kind of reality show.

But when it comes to a war of words, it was hardly a glancing blow.

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

Red and White

It's mid-February, so it's all about the red and white. Valentine's Day? No, actually—a lesser-known statutory holiday is Canada's Flag Day, celebrated every February 15. This week's links are a guide to everything you ever wanted to know about the flag of Canada.

How to Deal

What are the dos and don'ts of flag use and flying? The government's guidelines are a quick and easy reference. (For a more detailed explanation, read [this document](#).)

Six Flags over Canada

Sure, we all know the maple leaf. But did you know that over Canada's history there have been five other flags officially flown? Canadian Heritage has the history. Be sure to check out the photos—you may recognize elements of some of these historical flags in modern-day provincial flags.

Red and White and Maple

Even before Canada became a nation, the maple leaf had been proposed as its emblem. Ever wonder why? Canadian Heritage describes the history (and explains the flag's colours).

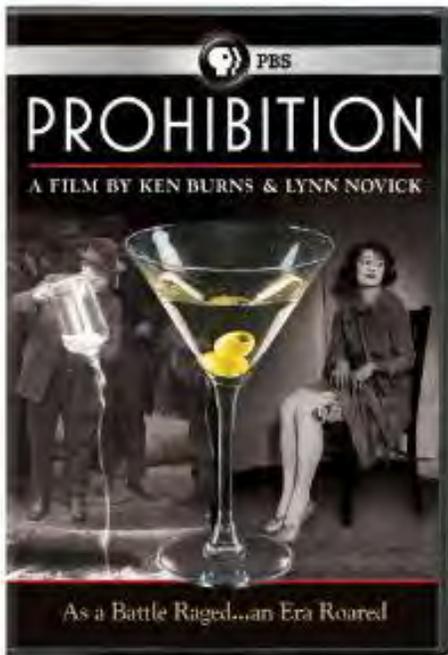
Maple Leaf Forever

One song which greatly popularized the concept of the maple leaf as a Canadian symbol was Alexander Muir's "The Maple Leaf Forever," which for many years was seen as a sort of unofficial national anthem (its pro-British sentiment made it unadoptable as an official anthem).



THE MINDFUL BARD

Wanda Waterman



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

Film: *Ken Burns: Prohibition* (2011)

Director: Ken Burns, Lynn Novick

Genre: Documentary

In 1920 America spurned Dionysus, god of wine and ecstasy, and Dionysus exacted a swift and lasting revenge that changed the social fabric of the country, the economy, and history. The 18th Amendment—which ushered in the era of Prohibition—encouraged dissent, deceit, lawlessness, and excessive alcohol consumption. It made organized crime extremely profitable and swelled the ranks and the influence of many criminal organizations.

Mabel Walker Willebrandt hadn't voted for Prohibition. She'd never been a member of the Christian Women's Temperance League. Previously, she'd even enjoyed the occasional drink. But when in 1921 she was appointed Assistant Attorney General and Congress handed her the responsibility of enforcing the inherently unenforceable liquor laws, she became a teetotaler and buckled down heroically to the job of stopping rumrunners and other miscreants from selling liquor illegally.

Prohibition is heavily peppered with this kind of miniature morality play. Each scene is an examination of some moral aspect of human nature—some good, some bad, but each one mesmerizing. Prohibition was one of the most dramatic existential experiments of the modern world, testing our notions of justice, equality, economic order, society, and ethics. With the 18th Amendment a situation was constructed which ensured that every weakness and strength of the human constitution would become writ large for the entire world to see.

The temperance movement had been fuelled by a desire for a better, healthier, more moral society and by the belief that government could make it so. The immediate results were encouraging: alcohol consumption dropped, as did instances of alcohol-related illnesses and deaths. Those who chose to become teetotalers reported happier family life, greater prosperity, and better health. In their view the new liquor laws were an avenue into a brighter future for American society.

But the wording of the 18th Amendment was far more severe than most people had anticipated. Most had thought that they could at least enjoy a beer or wine with no legal consequences, but this was not the case. There soon grew an increasing discontent with the whole idea of

“Prohibition was one of the most dramatic existential experiments of the modern world, testing our notions of justice, equality, economic order, society, and ethics.”

government legislating morality, and the grounds for defiance of the 18th Amendment added just the right amount of self-righteousness to the quest for access to booze and big bucks.

And so it began. The sense that the law was unjust—and that therefore those who flouted it were just—created a climate in which psychopaths in business and government could rise unimpeded to heights of wealth and power. The worst criminals alive claimed a sense of Robin Hood heroism, and civil disobedience became a rationalization for drinking yourself under the table.

Prohibition began in January 1919 with the passage of the 18th Amendment. It lasted until 1933, when the 21st Amendment repealed the law and granted liquor control to the states.

The illegal selling of liquor was mostly carried out by ethnic minorities and poor whites, but buyers spanned all social strata. Most notable among consumers of illegal alcohol were the very congressman who drafted and passed the bill and the justice department and police (as well as the police sent in to police the police) who were given the task of enforcing it.

A reluctance to enforce coupled with an eagerness to make easy money and a hankering for drink meant that liquor sales rose substantially, padding the purses of anyone willing to flout the law and morality.

Thus criminals like Al Capone were not only freed for action, they were practically given a leg up. One of the functions of law is to keep psychopaths from destroying everything, and Prohibition paved the way for the opposite effect.

The “dries” were mostly northern European, Protestant, and rural, whereas the “wets” were primarily urban and multi-ethnic, and this circumstance alone was a powerful impetus for political polarization. If Prohibition didn’t create the present gulf between rural and urban communities (the “moral majority” conflicts of the 1970s are one example of this gulf), then it certainly exacerbated it.

This film is in the Burns tradition of phenomenally good stuff. A wealth of significant information is presented in a manner that’s utterly engaging, and it provides endless resources for debate and creative inspiration.

Ken Burns: Prohibition fulfills four of the Mindful Bard’s criteria for films well worth seeing: 1) it poses and admirably responds to questions that have a direct bearing on my view of existence; 2) it stimulates my mind; 3) it harmoniously unites art with social action, saving me from both seclusion in an ivory tower and slavery to someone else’s political agenda; and 4) it makes me appreciate that life is a complex and rare phenomenon, making living a unique opportunity.





*From
Where
I Sit*

Hazel Anaka

That Would Be Good

Every year at this time, cynics question the true meaning of Valentine's Day. "Oh, it's just a shameless act of commercialism by greeting card companies, restaurateurs, florists and jewellers," says one. "My old lady knows I love her. I told her 20 years ago when we tied the knot. Nuthin's changed," says another. "That better be the half-carat one" coos a lovely, "unless you want to sleep on the couch."

With Canadians and others holding record levels of personal debt, the idea of buying yet another token of affection on credit with money we don't have is crazy. Most of us would be hard-pressed to remember what we got (or gave) last February. Most of us don't actually need *one more thing*. Even if it is white gold.

And while there is an element of truth and common sense in all of the above, this is hardly a black and white issue. Does anyone ever tire of hearing, "I love you, I need you, you make my life better"? Has any relationship ended because of expressed tenderness or appreciation? Or is the reverse true?

We all need to be aware of our credit scores and of what's in our wallets and bank accounts. On the other hand, as someone who had a flower and gift shop for nearly 16 years I know first-hand what turns the gears of the economic engine. We need to spend—if we can afford it—because a healthy business is a taxpayer and an employer, maybe even your employer. So if our feelings are genuine and congruent with our behaviour the other 364 days, if we can afford it, and if our motives are pure, then this type of commercialization is good. And necessary.

Is there anything wrong with this annual reminder that we should be showing affection to the one dearest to us? It's easy to become complacent or jaded or worn down and beaten up by the rigours of everyday life. It's easy to take others for granted. It's easy to reserve our best manners and behaviour for the world and neglect those closest to us. Being reminded is good.

'Til Debt Do Us Part TV host Gail Vaz-Oxlade includes a relationship challenge in every episode of her show. She forces couples who are in financial distress to find cheap or free ways to rekindle the romance that once burned. It may involve the guy making dinner for his wife or her packing a basket for a lunch in the park. It's about the time and the effort, not the dollar value.

This week we can choose to celebrate with a random act of kindness to a stranger, spend time instead of money, buy something magnificent for our loved one, or just be grateful for the love we feel. If we choose wisely, we will honour our beliefs, hang on to our integrity, and spread the love in a way that makes sense for us. That would be good, from where I sit.

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



ELECTIONS ARE HERE!

Want to get involved with your fellow AU students? Gain valuable experience while still serving others? Then AUSU Council might be the place for you! AUSU holds elections every two years to fill nine positions on Council. These nine councillors later select from among themselves an executive group of three (President, VP External, and VP Finance), and this executive is elected annually. This year, nominations will be accepted February 6th-20th, followed by which campaigning will occur February 21st-March 2nd, and voting March 3rd-6th. Elections (including campaigning and voting) take place entirely online, so you can participate from virtually anywhere in the world.

What is Council and what's required?

AUSU exists to serve the undergraduate students of Athabasca University. Some services are directly tangible to students (such as our handbook/planners, mailed free to students on request), while others are important, but more behind-the-scenes (such as meeting with the University to voice student concerns). Council is the body which directs and oversees these efforts, often by creating policies which are then carried out by the executive group and staff. Councillors help generate ideas and policies, and shouldn't be confused with counsellors—councillors do not provide counselling.

Councillors work by phone and email, and need to be able to devote about 2-5 hours per week to Council work. Council meetings occur by teleconference about once a month, and these meetings are scheduled at the best possible time for the majority of the group. So while all councillors have input into our meeting times, they must also be able to be flexible in the event that not everyone's wishes can be accommodated. Similarly, we welcome councillors from all over the world (we've recently had councillors in the Netherlands and Korea, as well as across Canada, participate!) but all councillors should be aware of time zone differences, and how this could affect meeting times in their location.

Councillors need access to reliable Internet and phone connections. We encourage councillors to use land lines while on teleconference, as this can help reduce background noise, but cell phones may be used if the sound quality is very clear. If you try to use a cell phone and we can't hear you, though, you'll need to make other arrangements. We also urge councillors not to drive during meetings, and to be at their computer if possible so that they can easily refer to meeting documents.

Councillors should also have a secure, reliable computer, and be willing to install some necessary software, including genuine Microsoft Office and Excel (if you don't have these, we can help you get them, but Open Office alternatives do not provide adequate functionality for Council work). Councillors must also maintain the confidentiality of their computer and files, so if the computer is shared, councillors should be prepared to create their own password-protected account.

What do current Councillors have to say?

“I truly enjoyed the sense of community on AUSU. I feel as though I was part of something bigger from interacting with other students, and other members of the AU community. I always got the sense that the work I was doing with AUSU was positively contributing to other students’ experiences within the University. While students might not always be able to see the results immediately, AUSU is involved in many of the positive changes at AU. Sometimes it is something as simple as suggesting changes to the wording of service standards on the AU . . . website, while other times it can be something more complex, such as opposing the raising of tuition.”

“It is a lot of work; it is challenging to work with different personalities and cultures through mostly email (and never face to face). It is also fun and a really great experience.”

“I’d like to emphasize the importance of having passion behind what you do. Passion and determination to dream and accomplish what you set out for yourselves to achieve . . . Being on council is not nearly as easy as it may seem. It’s tremendously important to have enough time in your schedule to devote to what is required of you. So before you put your name forward make sure that you take a good look [at] what’s going on in your life, as two years is a big commitment. ”

“I hope that the next Council will continue to foster positive relationships with AU, as well as continue to improve the services it offers to its student members. Taking the next step in a major website overhaul, as well as continuing to mail regular newsletters, and the newly implemented e-newsletter would all be services that would add benefit to AUSU members.”

“I have enjoyed meeting the other councillors, getting to know them, and developing relationships with them all. I also . . . love the democratic process we use for working with the other councillors through a problem or issue. While the conversations we have are varied and sometimes involve disagreement, I enjoy the mix of opinions and viewpoints. I especially look forward to the occasional comment or suggestion made by a councillor that brings up a side of an issue that I hadn’t considered, opening up my eyes and broadening my experience overall.”

“Being on council is a great experience. Not only is it fun and interesting, it offers a personal experience, an opportunity to communicate with fellow students . . . For those who make it onto the next Council, remember to be patient and avoid feeling overwhelmed. While there is a learning curve, it doesn’t take too long to feel welcome and a part of an interesting and important process.”

Want to know more?

For all the latest information on elections, and how you can self-nominate for our elections, visit our [website!](#)

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.

INTERNATIONAL NEWS DESK



At Home: Ball Game

Few things say community like thousands of people throwing bouncy red dodge balls at one another. And the happiness quotient is raised still more when the game breaks international records!

As the *Toronto Sun* [reports](#), the University of Alberta recently reclaimed its dominance at dodge ball when it set a new Guinness record for the largest game.

The hour-long game, which involved 4,979 players and “more than 1,250 spongy red balls,” was attended by a Guinness World Record adjudicator. He told reporters that the event was “tremendous to watch, really good fun.”

Previously, the university had also set participation records for the game (in 2010 and 2010).

But even better than setting records, the event let players score high levels of camaraderie. As Dean of Students Frank Robinson told reporters, “The whole thing is not necessarily about breaking a record, it’s about getting people out there, to blow off steam and have some fun.”

For more photos—including an aerial view!—check out MSNBC.com’s [coverage](#).

Around the World: Out of Line

Of all modern-day social offenses, few rank as high as butting in line ahead of someone who’s already been waiting. While evil looks and snarky comments are usually the only deterrent to would-be line-buffers, sometimes things get a little more drastic, as one US woman discovered to her regret.

As ABC News [reports](#), one line-butter was tasered after her social gaffe spiraled out of control.

The 37-year-old mom cut into line at a McDonald’s drive-thru in North Carolina. Staff refused to provide her service—and she refused to move, “[blocking] the drive-thru for 20 minutes before police arrived on the scene.”

A Sheriff’s Office representative told reporters that the woman was “defiant,” “[threatened] the deputies,” and “would not get off McDonalds property.”

She was tasered, arrested, and “charged with second-degree trespassing.”

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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