

THE VOICE

MAGAZINE

Vol 21 Issue 30 2013-08-16

Sharing It

Not-so-pretty picture

Revolutionary

Sounds of the future

It's a Disaster

Devil in the details

Plus:

Weird Canada

Click of the Wrist

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

Editorial: Picture This	3
Maghreb Voices: Melting Iron into Clay	5
Comic: Weird Canada	7

Columns

The Mindful Bard: <i>It's A Disaster</i>	8
AUSU Update	11

News and Events

Click of the Wrist	4
Did You Know?	9
International News Desk	10

From Our Readers

Letters to the Editor	2
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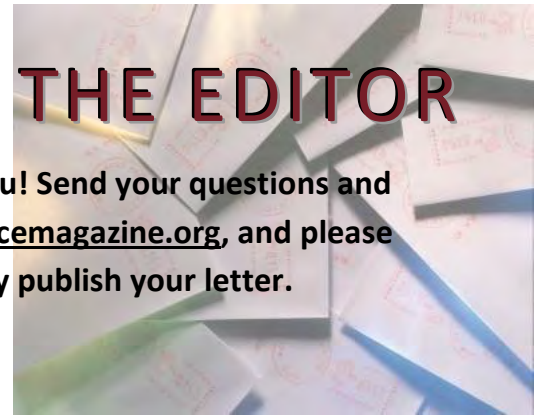
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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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

Picture This



Nothing's sure in this life except death and taxes, the old saying goes. A modern addition could very well be this: Every week, there's sure to be a new Facebook thing making the rounds.

Sometimes it's "If you love puppies and rainbows and hate bad stuff, click Like. Only 10 per cent of people actually will!!!!" Other times it's some heartwarming, if soppy, story about relationships. The funny stuff gets passed around too, but not to the same extent—unless it's by

George Takei (and even then). But what really gets us to hit our Share buttons are the scary posts, the alarming videos, the news bulletins about potential technology blips that could allow unsavoury persons to track our lives, kidnap our kids, and break into our homes.

They appear in our feed. We read them, because how can you not read something entitled "WARNING!!! If you take pics with your cellphone, watch this!" And so we do, and we freak out, and we get scared, and we want to spread the scare because it's only with information like this that we can protect ourselves and our friends. It's our *social obligation*, really—though such thoughts are frequently obscured by fast pulse rate and brain in full-on panic mode.

The problem is that such links, articles, and news clips are designed to create that reaction. After all, panic begets readers, which begets advertisers, which boosts the blog or news station's budget for another few months. And it's our social obligation not to fall prey to that, especially because of what it means for our personal safety and that of our family and friends.

When we check the facts instead of giving into the Share impulse, we may find that in fact the "new technology" is neither new nor even relevant; that the scary websites aren't in use anymore; and that, in fact, the news clip embedded in the link was from a local TV station spot made back in 2010.

It's easy to freak out over someone using some (long-outdated) website to figure out what school our kid goes to. We can *do something about it*. We can change settings, rail about technology, act offended, and, yes, share it. We feel like we're accomplishing something—all the while secure in the knowledge that it's probably not going to happen anyways.

What we miss in the meantime is our real social obligation: to spread word of the real risks, the actual dangers, even if they're icky or uncomfortable or just plain scary to talk about.

Statistically, the danger to kids, teens, and even adults does not come from strangers hiding in the bushes outside our homes, waiting 'til lights out to break in. Has that ever happened? Yes, it has. But for the vast majority of victims, the aggressor—whether physical or sexual—isn't a stranger. It's someone they know.

It's someone their family knows. It's someone everyone trusts. It's teachers, coaches, neighbours, dates, and yes, even family members—people who already know our kids', and our, schedules. People we know enough, we think, that the thought never, ever even crosses our minds.

And so we're unprepared.

Should we go around in terror that every friend and acquaintance is a killer, kidnapper, or molester in disguise? Should we wrap our kids in plastic until they're 40? No and no. But instead of clicking Share on every scary news bite designed solely for sensationalism, we should prepare our kids so that they know how to handle the trustworthy, the nice, the familiar—when those people act or speak inappropriately or out of turn.

We can't protect ourselves and our families from everything. But if we refuse to give too much credit to media hype and instead focus our energies on real problems, we'll be just one step closer to the safety we all crave.

CLICK OF THE WRIST

Photo Project

Still trying to figure out what to do with the photos from the trip to the cottage last long weekend? Looking to put together a photo montage? Want to do something a little more extraordinary with all the shots you know you'll take over Labour Day? Check out these great photo-film projects for a little inspiration:

Tour of Europe

Beautiful and breathtaking, "Nightvision" is a "supercut of some of the most iconic architectural landmarks in all of Europe, shot entirely at night." The filmmaker, Luke Shepherd, spent three months working on the project, which was entirely financed on Kickstarter.

Fashion Book

The Uniform Project was created by Sheena, a girl who wore the same little black dress for 365 days. Her mission: to raise money for disadvantaged kids who couldn't afford an education. The result: an education for the rest of us on the meaning and beauty of sustainable fashion. Her photo montage is fantastic!

World Wanderings

From Paris to Istanbul, from Boston to Lima, photographer Kien Lam's travels around the world yielded some gorgeous shots, but even better are the little stories behind each photo. Watch the montage, then scroll down for the background on these images of our wonderful world.



MAGHREB VOICES

Wanda Waterman



Melting Iron Into Clay

Album: *The Rough Guide to Arabic Revolution*

Last night I visited Orientalys, part of the Festival du Monde Arabe in Montreal's Old Port, and was struck for the umpteenth time by the joy and sensual expressiveness inspired by Arab music and dance. While watching the joyful smiles and swinging haunches, it occurred to me that it must have taken a formidable, unrelenting pressure for Middle Eastern dictators to squelch the spirit of dissent for as long as they did. Submission doesn't come easily to Arab peoples, male or female. How can it, with music like this?

Here for our socially conscious listening pleasure is an album that could serve as a survey course of the Arab Spring, delivering the anthems that punctuated the main historical events of that tidal wave of a long-repressed thirst for liberty. It's also a wonderful resource for those wanting a succinct view of the most significant musical developments in the Middle East today.

The most salient of these is—as can be expected—the grafting of Western onto Middle Eastern musical genres, something that's been happening for decades in the Arab world as elsewhere, but which before now was mostly underground. But public spaces that once piped in Celine Dion and Lara Fabian as sandwich fillings for Oum Kharthoum and Fairuz are now making room for some quality homegrown innovations; artists that before could only have been described as underground suddenly came into the spotlight during the Arab Spring and became, to their own delighted surprise, immediately relevant.

The dissident aspect has a wide spectrum on this sampler. We go from renowned British-Iranian religious singer Sami Yusuf's moving demand, *"Do not harm me—I am your truth, I am your faith, I am your youth,"* to the hip hop rants of Tunisia's El General and Mr. Shooma and Libya's Ibn Thabit, who brings us the dirge-like "Calling the Libyan Youth."

We have Cairo's idealized "Sout El Horeya" ("The Sound of Freedom") and some very authentic traditional music here as well, including Palestinian artist Ramzi Aburedwan, with "Kafkef Domouak."

True, Palestine didn't technically have a revolution, but neither, technically, did any other Middle Eastern country during the still-ongoing Arab Spring. But Palestine is the hub of the discontent in the Middle East because the Israeli-Palestine conflict represents all that is wrong with the Western foreign policy that laid the groundwork for Middle Eastern insurrection.

The songs on the second CD in this set are contributed by Ramy Essam, the Egyptian who was a prominent presence in Tahrir Square (his song “Erhal,” which demanded Mubarak’s resignation, is now legend) and who was temporarily detained and tortured by police after Mubarak stepped down. These tracks sound a lot like the kinds of songs that were circulating in North America at campfires and hootenannies in the late ’50s and early ’60s.

“It’s . . . a wonderful resource for those wanting a succinct view of the most significant musical developments in the Middle East today.”

The ’60s stamp is also fresh on songs from Tunisia’s Jasmine Revolution, represented by Emel Mathlouthi, a magnetic singer-songwriter who brings us the profoundly poetic “Kelmti Horra” (quoted above). She cites Bob Dylan is a favourite role model.

All well and good, but where are the songs for the tedious democratic process or behind-the-scenes activism, the true catalysts of enduring change? Where are the songs that spur artists, writers, and leaders to inspire the people with the kinds of values that make democracy feasible in the long term?

Let us, brothers and sisters, put our collective minds to this.

Many thanks for the assistance of Anis Brinsi of Montreal.

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

“In the midst of darkness, I am a star

And in the throat of the oppressor, I am a thorn

I am a blaze of fire blown by the wind

I am the soul of those who never forgot

I am the voice of the martyrs

I melt iron into clay

And turn it into a new love story

Into birds

Into homes

Into gentle breeze and refreshing rain”

from “Kelmti Horra” (“My Words Are Free”) by Tunisian singer-songwriter Emel Mathlouthi (translated by Anis Brinsi)

COMIC: WEIRD CANADA

Wanda Waterman



THE MINDFUL BARD

Wanda Waterman



Courtesy of Oscilloscope Laboratories.

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

Film: *It's a Disaster*

Director/Screenwriter: Todd Berger

Cast: Rachel Boston, Kevin M. Brennan, David Cross, America Ferrera, Jeff Grace, Erinn Hayes, Blaise Miller, Julia Stiles, Laura Adkin

"By time, indeed, mankind is in loss, Except for those who have believed and done righteous deeds and advised each other to truth and advised each other to patience."

Quran, 103: 2-3

Do People Really Get the End They Deserve?

It's a "couples brunch" day. Glen has retreated to a bedroom to try to clear his head after getting some devastating news. Lexi barges in and wastes no time in snuggling up to him as he nervously tries to resist her bold advances. When Lexi's husband, Buck, enters the room, Glen jumps up and tries to explain, but Buck sits him back down, strokes his thigh, and gently discloses that the reason why his marriage with Lexi is so happy is that they share *everything*.

It's the first time Glen has been to one of these couples brunches. He's Tracy's new squeeze and is trying to fit in. At first you think he's the sanest one in the crew, but appearances deceive.

These four couples, privileged, worldly, and successful, are woefully ill-equipped to face their own mortality, and when it stares them in the face their reactions are hilarious (e.g. cooking up homemade hallucinogens, having a glockenspiel singalong, and contriving last-minute adulteries).

There's one classic black comedy scene in which the two neighbours who'd been refused entry to the sealed-up house are sprawled out dead on the front steps of the stately suburban home. ("It was us or them.") Inside, the yuppies are still working through their issues, issues that just don't matter anymore (if they ever did). You don't want to laugh, but you have to.

The acting is superlative and it's obviously intended that the only ones who can inspire our sympathy are those who seem slightly less mad than the others. Several of these actors trained with Second City, and I'd love to see what they did to get into character.

The wonderful thing about irony is the way it opens your eyes to the weaknesses of the age. If this film is any indication, the weakness of today is our addiction to the distractions that help us forget the reality of death, distractions that end up undermining all that's meaningful in life.

The story doesn't resolve. Or rather its resolution is in the eye of the viewer, who hopefully will determine how to prepare a better defense should death suddenly loom.

It's a Disaster manifests five 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; and 5) it makes me appreciate that life is a complex and rare phenomenon, making living a unique opportunity.



Above: Rachel Boston, Kevin M. Brennan, Erinn Hayes, Blaise Miller, Julia Stiles, David Cross, America Ferrera, and Jeff Grace in a still from *IT'S A DISASTER*. Courtesy of Oscilloscope Laboratories.

DID YOU KNOW?

AU Press



Studying by distance? You can still get student discounts at the movies, bookstore, or train station! According to the [AU Student Calendar](#), every “active Athabasca University student” is eligible to request a photo student identification card.

To apply, you need to complete the required [form](#) and submit a photo. Acceptable photos are “taken by an Athabasca University staff member whenever possible.” However, if circumstances require it the Registrar’s Office will accept a digital photo together with a copy of your driver’s license, or a passport photo. If not taken by AU staff, photos must be signed by a guarantor, someone “who can attest to your identity.” Further instructions can be found [here](#).

Still have last year’s ID card? Don’t throw it away, as AU students are only eligible for one card during the course of their studies. To keep the card current from year to year, active students may “request a date sticker from the Office of the Registrar, AU Edmonton, or AU Calgary.”

INTERNATIONAL NEWS DESK



At Home: No Ticket

With all the congestion of downtown Toronto, it's no surprise that frustrated residents and visitors resort to illegal parking—and no surprise that they get ticketed for it. What may come as a shock, however, is just how long the ticket process can take.

As the *Toronto Star* [reports](#), one man has “been waiting for a court date for eight years.” In 2005 he “was ticketed for being too close to a fire hydrant,” but after contesting the ticket years ago, he’s still waiting for a court date to be scheduled.

Toronto is notorious for its “backlog of contested tickets.” A city spokesperson told reporters that most trials occur within 18 months of the ticket’s being issued, but records show that in 2012 “more than 20 per cent of people who contest[ed] their tickets [would] have to wait till next year – or longer.”

Part of the problem is the increased number of ticket recipients who contest their tickets. In 2004, “only 2.5 per cent of parking ticket recipients requested a trial,” whereas in 2012, almost 13 per cent did so. The city is considering a “fixed fine system . . . which would prohibit fine reductions in court and tack on a \$12.75 court fee when the trial results in a conviction.”

Around the World: This Vacation’s the Pits

Florida’s known for its theme parks, ecological diversity, and ability to attract disasters. Several vacationers got to experience all three when their resort collapsed into one of the state’s infamous sinkholes.

As CNN [reports](#), guests at a resort near Walt Disney World were “[forced] out of their rooms as one three-story building collapsed and another slowly sank.”

Around 10:30 pm one night, guests “heard loud noises and windows cracking.” Several guests had to “break a window so they could escape,” a witness told reporters, adding that “one woman was sitting in the tub, and the tub levitated, and that’s when she just grabbed a pair of shorts and came out with nothing.”

The sinkhole, 60 feet wide and 15 feet deep, “swallowed much of one building” and damaged another. All guests in the building were evacuated before the building collapsed.

Sinkholes, which frequently “start when bedrock dissolves but the surface of the ground stays intact,” are a problem in a state that already is a magnet for hurricanes and flooding.

AUSU UPDATE



Dear Members,

You may have recently seen information on the internet speculating about the future of Athabasca University. These reports suggest that the Alberta government may broker a merger between AU and University of Alberta, and that this may result in drastic changes to the services and programs offered to students AU students.

We want you to know that AUSU is aware of these rumours and is actively investigating the source – we will keep you informed as we know more.

We can tell you that AU is governed via a bicameral structure with two main governing bodies: the General Faculties Council (formerly Academic Council) and the Board of Governors (formerly Governing Council). AUSU has representatives on both of these governing bodies and we can confirm that there has been no formal discussion of a university merger among these groups. The AU president, Frits Pannekoek, has also assured the press that there is no truth to the rumour. On behalf of our members, we are seeking more information from the Board of Governors, the minister, and AU executives.

At this time we simply have no evidence that a merger is being seriously considered by AU, the U of A, or the Alberta government, and we note that among the many committees and working groups of AU, planning and development for the future continues as usual.

We know that our members are worried and want more information. We will update you as soon as we know more. At this time we do not feel there is any reason for students to worry or make changes to their study plans.

Do not hesitate to contact our office if you wish to talk about this or any other issue affecting AU students.

AUSU.

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

CLASSIFIEDS

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

THE VOICE

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