

THE VOICE

MAGAZINE

Vol 21 Issue 32 2013-08-30

Musical Paradox

Love that transcends

Summer Santa

Time to shop

Shh!

Telling secrets

*Plus:
Weird Canada
Maghreb Voices
and much more!*



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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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



MANIC SANTA

E.L. Farris



I'm tapping out this article from the waiting room in my psychiatrist's office. Okay, to be totally honest, it's the waiting room in the psychiatric wing at the local hospital, but I'm fine. Really, I'm fine. I'm just grabbing another script for Lamictal, which is what I take to treat bipolar disorder.

We have this scary idea of what constitutes mental illness, and usually it's ugly or strange. Say the words "mentally ill," and most of the time we expect to see someone like the bedraggled homeless woman who punched me when I gave her a few dollars at 18th and M in Washington, DC. Or we envision Russell Crowe playing the brilliant but mumbling professor from *A Beautiful Mind*.

I'm sort of relieved that the popular show *Homeland* has drawn a more accurate picture of what someone with bipolar disorder looks like. Carrie Mathison is a high-powered CIA analyst who fights terrorists and brings a brilliant, imaginative mind to bear, solving problems that bedevil everyone else at the Agency. She even solves cases when she's in the middle of a full-blown manic episode. She's powerful. She rocks. And she's mentally ill.

Like me.

Bipolar disorder doesn't look scary all the time in ordinary life, either. Not for me, at least. Usually it's a little bit of a hassle, and sometimes it's downright funny. Like the time I took all three kids toy shopping, and instead of saying a robotic "No, no, no" to everything, I said "Yes." I said yes to Lego. I said yes to Barbies. I even said yes to Lego plus Barbies, which is pretty much what the pink Lego are: a girly-girl interpretation of a building toy. And then I started saying yes to things the kids hadn't even asked for, like a remote Hummer, and a toy helicopter, and even one of those racing red rideabouts that the neighbours' kids kept driving through my flower garden. Oh, and the neighbour's kids? I said yes to toys for them, too.

I said yes so many times, and with such enthusiasm, that my middle child, the responsible one, and thank God I have one, actually put his hand on my arm. "Hey, Mom? Are you sure you really . . . we're supposed to get all of that?"

I smiled at my son, who was eight at the time. He looked just like my husband when he was worried. Vertical lines ran up and down his forehead, and even as he cast a forlorn gaze at the five large, brightly-coloured Lego packages stacked in one of the carts I was pushing, he added, "Do you really think Dad will be okay with this?"

And as I stood there in the bicycle aisle, I realized that we didn't need to buy helmets for all the children at the local elementary school. And then I started to shake a little, because just a few minutes ago I'd been overcome by this really generous, seemingly sensible wish to do just that. And even with a law

degree from one of the best universities in the country, I'd almost spent thousands of dollars that we didn't have—on toys. Toys for more than just my family.

I got very quiet. I was trying so hard not to cry, not to burst into tears of shame. I realized, as I slowly returned the humongous stack of items to the shelves, that I'd needed an eight-year-old to bring me back from the ledge of a manic shopping episode.

This was one of my first episodes with the manic side of bipolar disorder. No one got hurt. I didn't shred the family's credit. I didn't drink or get high, or wander off to Vegas for a few days. I suppose that I could and would do those things, but it's why I take my meds, get plenty of sleep, and see my therapist regularly.

This is the other side of what mental illness can look like. We're your neighbours, your mothers, your sisters, and your wives. And often the worst thing we'll ever do is try to play Manic Santa in the suburbs.

CLICK OF THE WRIST

Water Safety

The long weekend is here—and chances are that you've got plans to hit the beach, relax at the cottage, or go fishing out on the lake. You've packed your swimsuit, your tackle, and a great, relaxing read. But wait: before heading for the water, take a moment to refresh yourself on water safety. Ensure that your holiday has a happy ending!

Suit Up

Even if you're a strong swimmer, you still can drown in a boating accident if you're not wearing a life jacket or personal flotation device (PFD). According to the Canadian Red Cross, 88 per cent of boating accident deaths in Canada are a result of drowning. Click the link for a checklist of what to look for when shopping for the one article of "clothing" that could save your life. More detailed information on Canadian recommendations for life jackets and PFDs is [here](#).

Summer Chills

The sun may be shining and the air temperature comfortable, but the water is often a different story; more than half of Canadian drowning deaths took place in water that was less than 10 degrees C. Cold water brings additional challenges to those trying to stay afloat. Click the link to watch videos and get educated about the realities of cold water immersion—and how to survive it.

How to Save a Life

No one plans for it, but accidents happen—and the would-be rescuer is often also at risk. Be prepared and learn how to rescue a drowning victim while staying safe yourself.





Album: *The Road to Jajouka: A Benefit Album* (planned release: September 2013)

Artists: The Master Musicians of Jajouka, led by Bachir Attar and featuring various musicians including Medeski Martin & Wood, John Zorn, Flea, Lee Ranaldo (Sonic Youth), Billy Martin, Marc Ribot, Ornette Coleman, Mickey Hart (Grateful Dead), DJ Logic, Falu, Howard Shore, and the London Philharmonic.

*“The circle of this world is like a ring:
There is no doubt that we are nothing
but Naqsh, the design of its bezel.”*

Omar Khayam

Much Money Has Been Made From These Musicians—Let’s Give Back

Legend has it that the musicians of Jajouka, Morocco, once belonged to the courts of the sultans and were excused from manual labour to concentrate on honing their unique music, a genre unto itself. They’re now poor inhabitants of a remote village, but the core of their sound has not changed; they still play the *lira*, the double-reed *rhaita*, and two goatskin drums—the *tebel* and the *tarija*—and they still create some of the most mesmerizing, trance-inducing music the world has ever known.

Just ask any of the Rolling Stones (and Anita Pallenberg) about the powerful influence of the Master Musicians of Jajouka on Western rock and jazz as well as on their personal lives. The Stones and their entourage have been visiting the Masters in Morocco since the early 1970s, observing and participating in ceremonies enacted to a music rooted in primitive magical incantation as well as in the more recent influence of Sufi Islam.

This album presents the current incarnation of the Masters Musicians of Jajouka, which is actually more of a traditional office than a transient band, the positions—and often the instruments themselves—being handed down from father to son. The band is now led by Bachir Attar, the son of Hadj Abdessalem Attar, who led the group when the Rolling Stones, Robert Palmer, and Ornette Coleman were making their pilgrimages to the village. Bachir still plays the same *lira*, the bamboo flute handed down to him from his dad. *The Road to Jajouka* contains some new performances and also remixes of old recordings on which Western musicians have layered their own improvisations.

William S. Burroughs called the Master Musicians of Jajouka “the 4,000-year-old rock ‘n’ roll band” because of their long historical tradition and the legends that preceded their history. Burroughs, Brian

Jones, and Ornette Coleman were in part drawn to Jajouka because of the creative stimulation they had been seeking through experimentation with hallucinogenic drugs. The music of the Jajouka Masters comprises a context for religious ecstasy, a context easily transferred to the modern search for an expansion of the imagination.

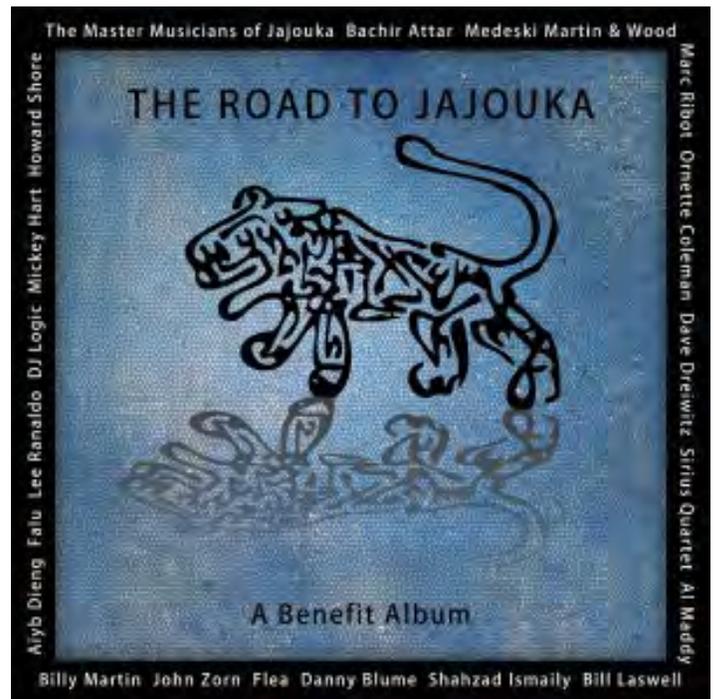
We can trace records of the group's existence back 1,300 years to pagan cultures that later merged with Sufism. The Sunni Islam that now dominates Morocco has a tendency to frown on music in general and on trance-inducing music in particular, but there's no evidence that these musicians have been oppressed, possibly because they're such a significant fixture in Moroccan culture. But despite their importance to the culture, the village in which the Masters live suffers from poverty that threatens the continuance of their musical traditions. This album is an attempt to raise funds to help it out; sales profits go to the non-profit The Jajouka Foundation, created this year as a means of preserving this music and drawing attention to it.

Don't expect this to be an adequate musicological introduction to the Jajouka genre; rather, it showcases how Jajouka has influenced Western musicians and music, as we're really hearing it through them. Recording over the Jajouka musicians is a tradition that started with Bryan Jones, whose memories of the music were so different from the tapes he'd brought home that he decided to remake the recordings in his own aural image.

Road high points: "Boujeloudia Magick," in which the flute is overlaid with a fitting wash of electric guitar; and "Into the Riff," whose psychedelic crescendo brilliantly interprets the trance-inducing qualities of Jajouka for the Western ear. "Jnuin" is a significant piece featuring jazz groundbreaker Ornette Coleman playing his sax over the Masters with riffs that actually echo the flavour of Jajouka while somehow still sounding like the kind of free jazz Coleman made famous.

At this point the common ground is laid out before us—jazz's African origins and Africa's open-hearted reception of the salmon that inevitably return to their spawning ground.

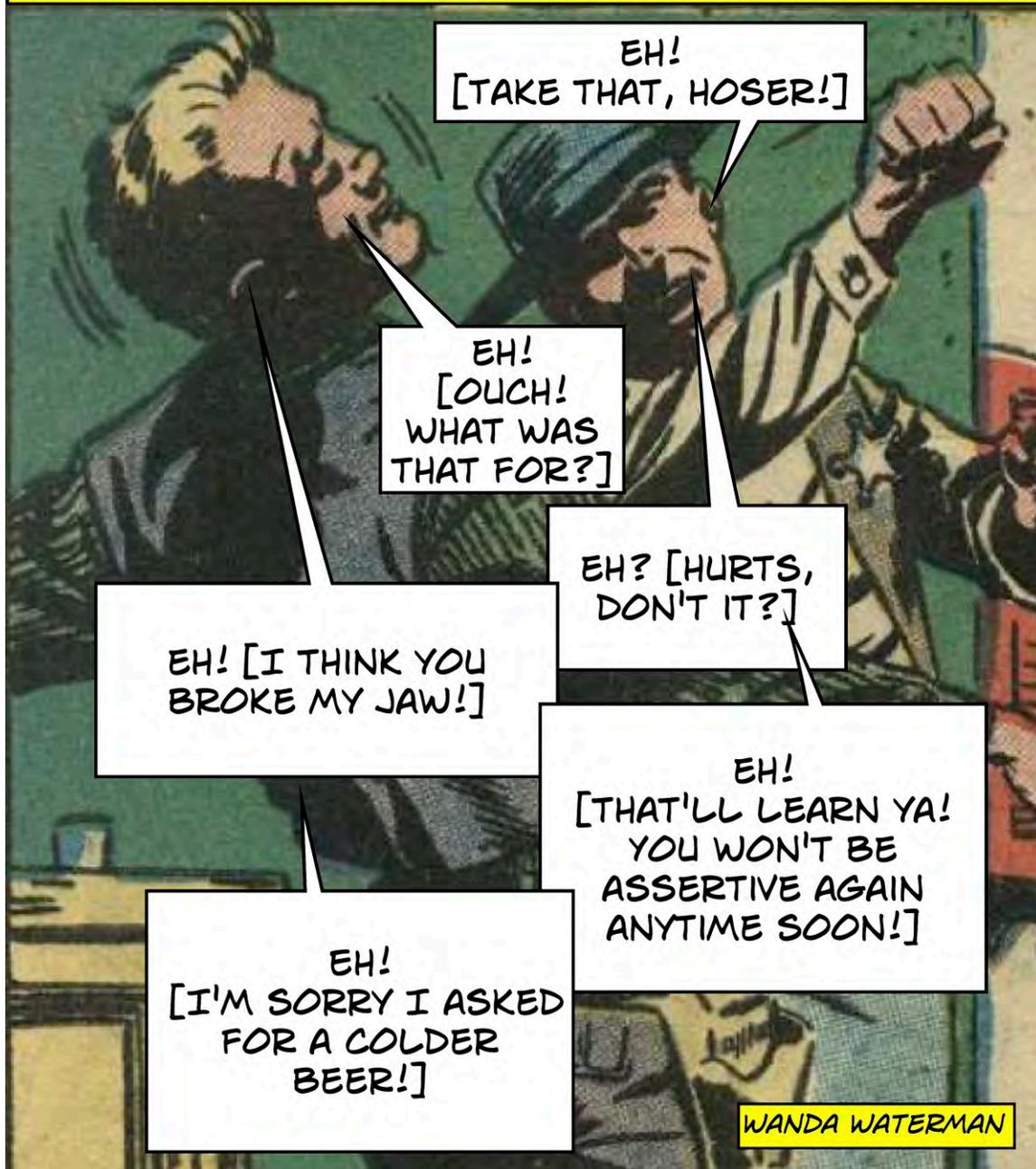
The album loses points for occasionally overlaying the traditional sounds with music incongruous to it, and for sometimes over-processing the traditional sound, but gains them back for adding such a rich source of musical inspiration and cultural significance to the already significant Jajouka recording canon.



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.

Weird Canada

THE WORD "EH" HOLDS THE POTENTIAL TO COMMUNICATE AN INFINITE NUMBER OF MESSAGES. IT'S RIGHT UP THERE WITH "FORGET-ABOUT-IT" BUT WITH AN APTLY CANADIAN BREVITY.



WANDA WATERMAN



Secrets

In the midst of an already insane summer, we will be taking one weekend off to celebrate. On Sunday we'll gather for Grady's fourth birthday party. Since I'm pretty sure he can't read yet, I'll let you in on the secret of what he's getting from us. Number one is the Transformers Bots and Robbers Police Headquarters set, because he's obsessed with the robots. Easy. Then I decided he needed a croquet set. Rationale: he's a boy who loves balls and sticks and has a huge yard. Genius. Third, we're springing \$65 for a pair of cowboy boots. This one's a bit iffy. Not sure it's the wisest thing to buy a city boy whose feet are still growing and whose parents disapprove. This is a kid who's grown up in Nikes and Pumas.

But he's wanted cowboy boots ever since he saw little Emilie in hers. Mind you, she has miniature horses and a wagon for giving people rides, so she's legit. But I questioned Grady, and he wants boots. So what self-respecting Nana would say no? Not this one.

That's Sunday. Saturday is a whole other thing. It's the kids' attempt to mark our 40th wedding anniversary. Did I ever tell you I was a child bride?

I tried to talk Hilary out of a party, but she insists we just need to show up. I think that's why Greg has been doing some landscaping and experimenting with more exotic barbequing. They also bought furniture for their new deck, and we delivered a fire pit from Carrie's place.

On the guest list are friends and family and some people from our bridal party—no, they're not all dead or in nursing homes. It's funny how couples select their attendants, the friends du jour. Some of them we haven't seen since the wedding. Close, huh? Lives drift apart; others fill the void.

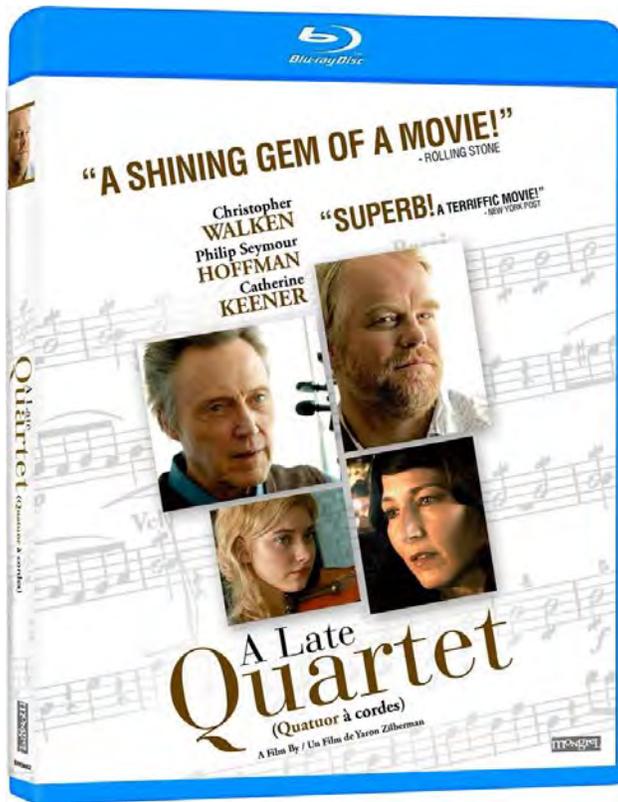
I intend to take our wedding album to the party, if for no reason other than comic relief. Roy's platform shoes, my Vari-grey glasses that look like I'm in shades, and the funny hair and mustache—his, not mine. My sister still has her bridesmaid's dress from August 11, 1973, and she's bringing it. I disassembled my custom-made gown years ago when I wanted to salvage the hand-applied lace. Don't think I actually did anything with it, but it seemed like a good idea at the time.

We don't especially like being in the spotlight, but this should be fun. Lies will be told, memories taxed, and stories repeated for the hard-of-hearing. We'll look around and be grateful to those who left their lives for a few hours to mark this occasion. We will be justifiably proud in our biggest accomplishment—raising two wonderful kids—because all else pales in comparison when you get that right. Hopefully no one will ask the reason for our success. That's one secret I'm keeping, from where I sit.

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

THE MINDFUL BARD

Wanda Waterman



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

Film: *A Late Quartet*

Director: Yaron Zilberman

Cast: Philip Seymour Hoffman, Catherine Keener, Christopher Walken, Mark Ivanir, Imogen Poots

“From the first note I understood the dynamic of a quartet and how special it was to be part of the group and that being part of the group is about becoming one. Up until that point I’d thought I was the one. I thought I was more special, set apart.”

Robert Gelbart, Philip Seymour Hoffman’s character in *The Late Quartet*

The Sweet Paradox of the Joy of Music

Robert, the second violin, is describing to an interviewer how he came to join the Fugue Quartet, a critically acclaimed chamber orchestra with a palpably exquisite chemistry. He’s describing the emotional phenomenon many musicians experience during moments of intense synergy: that oceanic sense that one has abandoned one’s own ego to become part of something marvellous and eternal.

The crisis that drives the story is that Peter, the cellist, has just learned he’s in the early stages of Parkinson’s. He asks that the first concert of their next season be his farewell, and he’s chosen the cellist whom he wishes to replace him.

The story does a masterful job of showing how identity and sense of self can be expanded to include others, and at the same time how it can be threatened by the creeping sabotage of the ego that won’t give up without a snarling, hissing fight.

A major prop is the String Quartet in C# Minor, Opus 131, one of Beethoven’s “late” string quartets, whose score shows up in different incarnations on the music stands of each of these performers, each score appropriately wrinkled with use and riddled with differing notes. It’s the thing that unites them—the beauty and meaning to which they all aspire in their own way—and the process of working on it together gives them the opportunity to define the uniqueness of their individual selves.

Music makes us feel immortal; by means of it we can be closely connected to a distant past and also usher in elements of the future. If we’re excellent musicians or composers, our fame may live on after us. But ultimately the reality of death belies all of this and adds a sense of tragedy to our joys and aspirations.

Music brings love, providing a context that facilitates and enhances the experience of love. In *A Late Quartet* the romantic love is as meaningful and profound as it gets, but it's still compromised by fears that the love returned may have been only pretense.

Music lifts above the mundane until the mundane whines about neglect and fills us with shame.

Music can open our minds and make us more tolerant and accepting, until one of our geezer musician friends starts sleeping with our young daughters. Music teaches connection and self-sacrifice for the good of the music until the geezer is asked to sacrifice the lovely young girl for it.

But music, in particular making music with others, is a formidable expression of love and an opportunity to experience a kind of love that in the end transcends all the discipline, time, effort, and technique we've used to carry it forward.

The acting and directing in this film are a singular achievement, making repeat viewings an unending delight.

A Late Quartet manifests nine 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; 6) it displays an engagement with and compassionate response to suffering; 7) it gives me artistic tools; 8) it makes me want to be a better artist; and 9) it makes me appreciate that life is a complex and rare phenomenon, making living a unique opportunity.

DID YOU KNOW?

Student ID Cards



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: Calling the Cops

If you've got concerns about your personal property, you should call a security expert, and if there's an immediate threat, the police. But you might want to rethink this if the property you're trying to protect is illegal—as one Ontario woman recently learned.

As the *Toronto Sun* [reports](#), the 46-year-old woman called the police last week “seeking tips on how to prevent someone from breaking into her home and stealing her pot plants.”

Although the officer who received the call “reminded the woman that she was talking to a police officer on a recorded line,” she continued to discuss her concerns. A police spokesperson told reporters that the woman was worried about “[getting] violently robbed.”

A couple of days after the phone call, a drug enforcement unit discovered “\$6,000 in marijuana plants . . . growing in [her] house.” The woman was “charged with production of marijuana and possession of marijuana.”

Around the World: Back from the Grave

In the midst of mourning, a family received a shocking surprise: the woman they'd just buried wasn't related to them at all, and the family member they'd thought dead was in fact alive.

As *USA Today* [reports](#), 50-year-old Sharolyn Jackson “turned up alive nearly two weeks after her family held a funeral and burial for her.”

Jackson, who had been “receiving treatment for drug and mental health problems,” was reported missing in mid-July. Around the same time, a woman resembling her was found in the streets; when paramedics brought her to a hospital, she passed away.

Photos of the body were identified by one of Jackson's sons and a social worker who had been helping to treat Jackson. While the resemblance wasn't complete—the nose looked different—Jackson's family “assumed something had happened to the nose during the embalming process.” Jackson's mother told reporters that the deceased woman looked “so much like Sharol [that] they could be sisters.” The funeral was held August 3.

Last week, however, Jackson reappeared—and “police confirmed her identity through fingerprints.” She was also indentified by her son, who realized they'd made a “terrible mistake.”

The deceased woman is still unidentified, but authorities plan to exhume the body “in hopes of correctly identifying it.”

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.

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