

THE VOICE

MAGAZINE

Vol 21 Issue 36 2013-09-27

Back to the Future

Curse of technology

On the Go

E-texts are coming

Voice Editor

New job posting

*Plus:
From Where I Sit
The Mindful Bard
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.



E-TEXT INITIATIVE: WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW, PART II

Christina M. Frey



This fall AU is rolling out the first phase of its e-text initiative, which will eventually see the university make the switch from textbooks to electronic books in all its courses. However, the process will be gradual, and you may not see any changes in course materials for some time—even if you’re taking courses that fall under the first phase of the initiative.

This two-part series addresses student questions and concerns that have arisen during the initial implementation of the e-text initiative. Part I discussed whether or not you will need to purchase an e-reader. In short: don’t, at least not right away. Not all e-readers will be compatible with the e-texts, and not all courses will be using e-texts

immediately, since even courses falling under phase 1 will be using up their stockpile of textbooks before giving students access to the e-texts. The time frame will depend on how quickly the university’s stock is depleted. For further details, see the *Voice* coverage [here](#).

Access: At Home and On the Go

Once you’re enrolled in a course that’s currently using e-texts, you may have additional questions about how you may access and use the texts.

If you’re on the go or wish to read your e-texts offline, you can access texts through the downloadable Bookshelf for PC/Mac and Bookshelf apps for iOS, Android, and Kindle Fire. Hoping for the freedom to access your texts across several devices? At this time AUSU believes that “that you will be able to install your texts on up to two computers, AND up to two mobile devices.” Further information can be obtained [here](#).

If you prefer hard copies of your textbooks, be aware that if you are enrolled in a course that is using e-texts, “you will only have the option to receive the electronic version of the text with your course registration,” AUSU notes. While you may obtain a hard copy yourself (at a discounted rate), you will still be responsible for the course materials fee for electronic copy.

AUSU is “working with the university to try to reinstate the option to buy hardcopy books.”

If you wish to print a copy and read it like a hard copy textbook, you’ll want to note that the user agreements allow students to print a copy at home for personal use. However, AUSU notes that “as far as we know at this time you will not have an option to print the entire book in a single operation. You may have to print one page at a time.” In the near future, AUSU plans to test e-text printability.

The e-text initiative is new and still in its first phase, so be aware that changes may occur. As the initiative is implemented across the university, keep following AU’s official e-text [website](#) in order to stay informed of changes or other important information.

JOB POSTING: Managing Editor, *The Voice Magazine*

The Voice Magazine is seeking a new Managing Editor to handle all the day-to-day duties of publishing *The Voice* each week.

We publish 50 issues per year each Friday. Hours are flexible, but you must be able to devote 25-30 hours per week to the job. The Editor will work from home and must have a good quality computer and high-speed Internet. Some software will be supplied.

SKILLS AND APTITUDES

The ideal candidate has solid post-secondary training; experience with management and administration; is approachable and able to help others grow, while maintaining high standards; and has a strong commitment to providing content relevant to the Athabasca University community.



Qualifications

- Superior writing skills and flawless copy-editing with knowledge of Canadian usage
- Excellent Internet research skills
- Experience with Adobe Acrobat, PhotoShop, and Microsoft Office
- Advanced Microsoft Word and intermediate Excel and Outlook skills
- Knowledge of copyright and privacy legislation an asset
- Knowledge of citation guidelines (APA format)
- Experience with social media and online forums
- Must be very detail oriented
- Very strong computer/technical skills
- Knowledge of file sizes; ability to format graphics and other files for the web
- Well organized, with excellent time-management skills
- Able to maintain organized electronic files
- Team player, professional, positive attitude
- Responsible: able to consistently meet deadlines without oversight

-
- Able to learn and adapt to changing policies and requests
 - Completed or working toward a university undergraduate degree in English, communications, journalism, or other related field; equivalent experience or college credentials considered.
 - Administrative and media experience an asset
 - Editing certification an asset

DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Copy-Editing and Writing

- Proofread and copy-edit all articles submitted to *The Voice*
- Contact writers for clarification of material or sources as needed
- Write the editorial column and other copy as needed to provide adequate coverage of events important to AUSU members
- Assist new writers in developing their skills
- Maintain awareness of copyright and publication standards in Canada
- Check all articles for copyrighted material
- Perform regular Internet searches to check if submitted materials have been published elsewhere, and if *Voice* articles have been used without permission
- Ensure all *Voice* content is well-referenced, ethical, and follows sound journalistic ethics

Invoicing and record keeping

- Prepare invoices for freelance writer payments each month
- Maintain a list of all writers and submit changes of address or performance notes to the Editor in Chief
- Ensure all records are maintained and transferred to the Editor in Chief regularly for backup and storage
- Maintain records in accordance with privacy legislation

Publication

- Upload articles to the database for each week's issue
- Prepare and upload PDF version of *The Voice* each week

- Format graphics as needed for *Voice* stories

Communication and planning

- Reply to *Voice* email and provide information to current and prospective writers
- Develop ideas for recruiting writers, adding content to the paper, and advertising
- Utilize social media, student forums, and other communication methods to promote *The Voice* and learn about the readership
- Regularly assess the publication and website to recommend updates; help develop reader surveys.

Expectations

- Planning and Organization: Setting priorities and preparing for future events by visualizing progress.
- Communication: Ability to express ideas written and orally. Maintain open dialogue with others. Reporting of information to necessary channels.
- Competence: Make sound judgments and solve problems.
- Performance: Quality tasks done to standard and in a timely manner while being able to prioritize.
- Commitment: Stewardship of *The Voice's* interest and objectives.
- Reliability: Dependable for following through on task accomplishments in a timely manner.
- Detail Oriented: absolute consistency and attention to formatting, spelling, and general document appearance.
- Aptitude for Learning: Adaptability to change.

If you are interested in this position, please email Tamra at voice_apply@ausu.org with a cover letter and resume. All applicants will be asked to complete a copy-editing and writing skills test, and to submit writing samples. Remuneration will be 28 - 35k per annum, depending on experience. *The Voice* covers some expenses and provides a free AU course each year. *The Voice* is an equal opportunities employer.

Resumes will be accepted up to and including September 30, 2013.

THE MINDFUL BARD

Wanda Waterman



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

Film: *Without Shepherds*

Directors: Cary McClelland, Imran Babur

Producer: Cary McClelland

Genre: Documentary

Forget Everything You Thought You Knew About Pakistan

“The path I’m on is right for me. There’s pleasure in the seeking. There is a joy in it. It has a sweetness. Yes, sometimes there is bitterness, but when you digest it, it has its own nectar. Your actions—that’s all that matters . . . I understand the poet Bulleh Shah when he says, ‘I am neither devoted to the mosque, nor following in the ways of the unbeliever. I am neither clean nor unclean, neither Moses nor Pharaoh. Bulleh, I don’t know who I am.’”

Arieb Azhar

The Sufi Singer

Arieb has been singing to a group of men who appear to be from the Islamic brotherhood. They’re kind and non-judgmental, showing great appreciation for his deeply spiritual songs even though in many Muslim circles music is forbidden. But his response above is an answer to their invitation to spend three days in prayer with them at the mosque. They accept his refusal with grace.

Their conversation is interrupted by a waiter entering the train’s cabin with a metal tray. He casts a peeved glance at the camera and demands their dirty cups. As the cups are placed haphazardly onto his tray, he swiftly rearranges them into strict rows. His pointless anal-retentive act is an excellent illustration of the oppressive and fruitless micro-managing of dictatorial governments.

The film is rife with this kind of symbolism, and its singular accomplishment is how it has made such a powerful and effective statement with purely artistic as opposed to dialectical tools.

The Nation is the People—and What a People!

Without Shepherds comes at a crossroads in the history of a country that has seemed to have been at one crossroads or another from its beginnings. Pakistan’s current state is the aftermath of a series of empires and dynasties, conquests and colonizers, the most recent being the Sikh Empire followed by the occupation by Britain’s East India Company until independence in 1947. Though it now has a Muslim

majority, Pakistan has a long history of religious diversity, including Hindus, Buddhists, and Christians, some of whom have tolerated each other with much goodwill and others not so much.

The film seems to be suggesting that leaders as such are rarely good—they can be just okay or neutral or diabolical—and that it's the people who choose to live in a just society. It's also only the people who can make it happen, despite the opposition of hubris-swollen figureheads and bureaucrats.

The enchanting soundtrack to this film is almost a character in itself, a truly enhancing background for these vivid moving images of a cross-section of Pakistan's people, architecture, splendid interiors lined with brilliant mosaics, and gloriously rugged rural landscapes.

The Fashion Maven and the Journalist

Every person who graces this gorgeous and profound documentary is marvellous and amazing. Every scene moves the heart and every detail tells a story.

Two of the Pakistanis followed are women, one a fashion model turned socially conscious entrepreneur and another a journalist. Both of these women are awe-inspiring in their poise, assertiveness, intelligence, and self-confidence. They make one curious as to the kind of culture that spawned and nurtured such uninhibited feminine strength.

Let Them Roam Free

A former mujahedeen, while guiding us through a beautiful mountainside covered with green shrubs, crags, and crystal pools, talks of the day he realized that what they were doing in the Taliban was wrong: two prisoners had been captured, and even though they had done nothing and he and his friends begged for their lives to be spared, they were shot in cold blood. His face is overcome with sadness at this memory, but he soon returns to discussing the landscape.

"Sometimes you will see animals here without a shepherd," he says. "We let them roam free. And no matter how far the cows wander, they come home by dusk."

Enough said.

Without Shepherds manifests 11 of the Mindful Bard's criteria for films well worth seeing: 1) it's authentic, original, and delightful; 2) it poses and admirably responds to questions that have a direct bearing on my view of existence; 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; 4) it provides respite from a sick and cruel world, a respite enabling me to renew myself for a return to mindful artistic endeavour; 5) it's about attainment of the true self; 6) it inspires an awareness of the sanctity of creation; 7) it displays an engagement with and compassionate response to suffering; 8) it gives me artistic tools; 9) it makes me want to be a better artist; 10) it renews my enthusiasm for positive social action; and 11) 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.

PRIMAL NUMBERS

S.D. Livingston

**Let's Not Party Like It's 1986**

What do the Gutenberg Press and self-driving cars have in common? They're among the countless inventions that change our lives in both good and bad ways. It's natural to want to step back from that change sometimes—like the McMillan family, who are shunning technology introduced after 1986. But does our embrace of technology really have to be all or nothing?

On the surface, the McMillans are like a lot of other Canadian families: they're young and unmarried and are working parents to two small children. For one year, though, they've chosen to be anything but a typical modern family. They've shut down their social media networks, unplugged from the Internet, and refuse to use any devices introduced after 1986. Blair McMillan has even taken to wearing a classic '80s hairstyle: a mullet.

He and his girlfriend, Morgan, have made an exception to low-tech life in their use of a 2010 Kia. Minus a GPS, of course. As *The Atlantic* reports, Morgan does use computers at work. But Blair "has taken things farther—to the extent that he's lost business."

Their one-year lifestyle project started this April, partly with a view to writing a book about the experience, but mainly because they had "a vague sense that gadgets were cheating their children of their childhoods." One example happened on a day that Morgan asked their five-year-old son to play outside. The youngster refused because he was engrossed in playing with his iPad.

But are new technologies really to blame, or does the issue have more to do with the ways we choose to use them? When a new technology begins to gain critical mass, it's tempting to feel a surge of nostalgia for the tools or methods it displaced. The older way suddenly seems better, safer, healthier. The new ways can seem scary, rushing in and taking over before we've had a chance to get used to them.

Take the printed book, for instance. Suppose you live in an oral society. Most people have excellent memories because that's what everyone relies on to remember things. Shopping lists, birthdays, epic poetry—you carry everything you need to know around in your head. And if you don't know it, your neighbour's probably got that special recipe tucked away in *his* head.

Then, while you're walking to the market one day, a friend tells you about a fabulous new invention that will change the world forever. It's called the mechanically printed book, and pretty soon you won't know what you did without it. There are drawbacks to it, of course. Your memory won't be nearly as good as it used to be, since you can simply look up anything you want anytime. People will be distracted, getting lost in the pages of an exciting story. Kids will want to sit for hours and read comic books instead of running around playing.

And books will cause a great deal of pollution, what with all the clear cutting of forests and the power needed for the paper mills and printing presses—not to mention all the ink that will get used.

Oh, and a lot of people will get tired of the books they own. Sometimes they'll get dumped into landfills. Other times they'll sit around in musty attics or basements, a haven for mould and insects. They'll take up a lot of space, too, which means trucks to transport them and buildings to house them.

"It all comes down to using each new piece of technology carefully, learning to use it to our advantage while being careful of the drawbacks."

So does that mean we should refuse the benefits brought by the printing press, everything from the comic books to the classic literature it made easily available? Of course not, any more than we should eschew our iPads and Facebook accounts. It all comes down to using each new piece of technology carefully, learning to use it to our advantage while being careful of the drawbacks.

The McMillans' project sounds interesting as a short-term experiment. But I can't help wondering if a more productive year-long lifestyle change would be to focus on limiting the negatives and enjoying the positives of 21st-century technology. I bet there's even an app for that.

S.D. Livingston is the author and creator of the Madeline M. Mystery Series for kids, as well as several books for older readers. Visit her [website](#) for information on her writing.

DID YOU KNOW?

Quizlet



School may have just started, but those midterms are coming up fast—and it's time to start thinking of study strategies. [Quizlet](#), whose goal is to "build beautiful, simple software that helps students learn," is free web-based software that allows you to search for study aids or create your own.

Originally created by a high school student to help him study better, Quizlet "has no pre-determined curriculum" but is a massive resource of quizzes, flash cards, and other study tools created by students and teachers. Whether you're studying Spanish, art, nursing, or law, you're sure to find something to help you study.

And if you you're looking for something a little more closely tailored to your needs, you can create custom study aids like flash cards, oral tests, quizzes, matching tests, and more.

Prefer learning on the go? Quizlet also has free apps available for iOS and Android.



Giving Thanks

How did you spend September 21? Did you rush around in the harried fashion common to most of us? Or did you revel in the blessings of the day? Did you snap at your significant other and hope the kids would keep playing their video games and stay out of your hair? Or did you embrace, figuratively and physically, those you love and share a home with? Did you look up from your phone, computer, and life long enough to blink? Or did you curse the shortness of your day and the length of the ever-present to-do list?

Did you know that September 21 was World Gratitude Day? Its origin was a 1965 Thanksgiving dinner where attendees discussed the need for a globally unifying holiday and pledged to begin celebrating it in their home countries the following September. In 1977 the United Nations Meditation Group declared it a global holiday. It has been described as a “holiday for all peoples, a day of meditation for all religions, a day of celebration for all humanity, united by knowledge of simultaneously shared emotion, a day when triumph of the spirit can make a world community.”

Despite its importance and long history, I didn’t know of its existence until I saw it mentioned in a magazine. Now, as with all knowledge, I can never “un-know” it again.

So the question then becomes what to do with the information. I could try yet again to begin the disciplined practice of writing in a gratitude journal every evening before bed. Oprah advocated that habit years ago, and it’s served her well. It might also help sleep come easier if I ended my day with a warm glow rather than a recitation of what didn’t happen that should have. A confession: I just found the last such journal and am ashamed to admit that my last entry is January 6, 2008. It’s now on my night table waiting for tonight’s new beginning!

For those who want a more public way to shout their gratitude from the rooftops or who care what celebrities have to say about the subject, visit [The Gratitude List](#). “Gratitude is the memory of the heart,” according to author Todd Aaron. The instructions are simple: “It begins like this. I am grateful for . . .”

It’s fine to journal a daily gratitude list, but it’s equally important to share our gratitude with those to whom we’re grateful. I’m sure each of us have regretted not doing so with someone who is now gone. “If only I’d said . . .” we wail. Don’t let another day pass without saying what needs to be said to whomever needs to hear it, whether it’s a stranger or the love of our lives. And we needn’t wait for September 21 to roll around again, from where I sit.

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

COMIC

Wanda Waterman

OVERHEARD



EVERYONE'S PROTESTING THE QUEBEC CHARTER OF VALUES. I DON'T KNOW WHAT IT IS, BUT CAN ANYTHING WITH THE WORDS "CHARTER" AND "VALUES" IN ITS NAME BE SO BAD?

AND AS FAR AS I'M CONCERNED, ANYONE WHO INSISTS ON WEARING THEIR RELIGION OUGHTA GO BACK HOME.



ALL EXCEPT MY PSYCHOTHERAPIST.

WRITTEN BY WANDA WATERMAN

INTERNATIONAL NEWS DESK



At Home: Storm Chaser

Move over, tornado trackers: the latest Canadian technology's after the bigger game. This Sunday will see the launch of a new satellite, one whose mission is to track space storms.

As the CBC [reports](#), Cassiope is part of the Canadian Space Agency's quest to "[make] a significant contribution to unravelling the mysteries of space weather," the agency told reporters. The agency explained that the satellite will enable the collection of "new data on space storms in Earth's upper atmosphere."

The information will help scientists understand Earth's weather patterns.

Cassiope's mission "was developed by the Canadian Space Agency together with 10 Canadian universities," including the University of Calgary.

Around the World: Wedding Bells

A wedding's already a stressful event, what with coordination and planning and deposits and contracts. But what happens when the wedding's cancelled and all those plans must be put aside? For one US couple, the answer was simple: throw the party anyway, and invite the homeless.

As ABC News [reports](#), by the time "Willie and Carol Fowler's only daughter cancelled her wedding 40 days before she was set to walk down the aisle," they'd already put down deposits on the "venue, food and entertainment."

Faced with losing their deposits, the Fowlers decided to change a sad situation into a happy one, and changed "the guest list -- to 200 homeless people."

They contacted Hosea Feed the Hungry, a "nonprofit organization . . . that provides homeless individuals with services and resources," explaining their dilemma and proposed solution.

While at first the charity's administrators thought it was a joke, they soon agreed to the generous plan, and two weeks ago 200 "homeless women, children and families" were bused to the upscale venue, where they ate salmon and chicken and enjoyed the evening's entertainment (including a room with children's entertainers for the younger guests.)

The Fowlers' daughter, who attended the alternative celebration, found the day "bittersweet but rewarding," her father told reporters. "There is no way to explain how it makes you feel," he added.

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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