

THE VOICE

MAGAZINE

Vol 22 Issue 05 2014-01-31

Health Matters

When Diet & Exercise Aren't Enough?

Science Too Hard?

Play More Games

Why the AUSU Planner?

Ten Things you Might Miss

Plus:

*Gregor's Bed
Writer's Toolbox
and much more!*



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www.voicemagazine.org

500 Energy Square
10109 – 106 ST NW
Edmonton AB
T5J 3L7

800.788.9041 ext. 2905

Email
voice@voicemagazine.org

Publisher

AU Students' Union

Editor-In-Chief

Tamra Ross

Managing Editor

Karl Low

Regular Contributors

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

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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

Karl Low



The Third Law of Unintended Consequences

The brouhaha about the call centre continues to simmer. Most recently, the *Athabasca Advocate* published a letter from AUSU on the issue, which points out that not only have the students repeatedly contacted them with concerns about the change to the call-centre, despite the assertions of GSA President, Amanda Nielsen, that students are in favor of the change but that neither Amanda nor even the university have really consulted with stakeholder groups about whether this change will be accepted.

However, the issue is no longer confined to just the *Athabasca Advocate*. The *Edmonton Metro* has now picked up the story, in part fueled by the formal grievance filed by CUPE. I've also heard that some students are also making their opinions known to the university administration by writing to Carol Lund, the University Secretary. It seems that Ms. Nielsen's action has demonstrated to us the third law, that every action has an equal and opposite reaction, often one that's unintended at the beginning. If this reaction can get the University to slow

down and start actually doing some research on whether a shift to call centre will actually save them money or simply end up costing them students and credibility, that's a very good thing in my opinion.

It would also be a good thing simply because it would demonstrate to us that systems do not have to control people, but rather that we can have an effect on the systems, so long as we're industrious enough to simply speak up about it.

And speaking of speaking up, I've been informed that the coming election will also contain a vote on the implementation of a new health care plan for students. You can find details about this health care plan on the [AUSU site](#). One of the difficulties of coming up with health care for AUSU members is that many of us are simply visiting from other universities, or are working, so either already have health care plans, or simply don't want to spend the extra money on one. AUSU has previously taken the stance that only opt-in programs are acceptable, but those have had little success. This new plan is an opt-out version, but unlike many student health care plans, does not require any proof of other insurance or reason for opting out.

You may note that this edition of the Voice Magazine has a lot of AUSU and education related material. That's intentional. With the AUSU election coming up soon, I like to encourage people to really think about what this university means to them, both in what they can get from it and what they want to get. Once the call for candidates closes on Sunday, then the really interesting part begins where we start to hear what plans people have for AUSU.

In the meantime, while "From Where I Sit" is not with us this week as Hazel is taking a well deserved vacation, our other regular columnists are bringing us back to basics, with The Writer's Toolbox giving us a primer on grammatical lingo, and Primal Numbers looking at not so basic science being done with every-day people. We also have reviews, advice, a comic, and of course, the 2nd part of Katie D'Souza's article on handling weight loss when the traditional means just aren't working. So, please, read, enjoy, and let me know what you think.

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read "Karl".

Health Matters

Katie D'Souza



Weight Loss: More than Diet and Exercise, Part II

If your diet and exercise resolutions got off to a bad start you can always get back on the healthy living wagon and begin again. But what if you've been working hard at eating properly and exercising, and still aren't seeing results? Last week we looked at two factors that might be keeping you from weight loss success: stress and cortisol. This week we look at the thyroid, which also plays a big role in enhancing or inhibiting weight loss.

What is the thyroid?

The thyroid is a gland located in the front of your neck, under the chin. It performs many vital functions, including controlling your basal metabolic rate (BMR)—essentially a measure of much energy you would expend if you remained at rest all day. It's easy to see how this is tied to weight loss; if your BMR drops due to thyroid malfunction, you won't burn as much energy during the day. You'll

have difficulty losing weight, and might even start gaining.

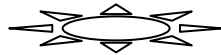
What causes the thyroid function to slow? Bodily changes like pregnancy or menopause can be a factor, but genetic predisposition plays a big part as well. Some symptoms of low thyroid function include lethargy, hair loss, swollen neck, poor sleeping patterns, and, yes, difficulty losing weight. You can also get a general idea of your thyroid health by checking your basal body temperature—the temperature of your body at rest (best measured upon waking, and before getting out of bed). Although a woman's basal body temperature can fluctuate depending on where she is in her menstrual cycle, a consistently low number in the early part of the cycle (less than 36.3 degrees Celsius) can indicate subclinical hypothyroidism.

To assess your thyroid function, have a blood test done to detect levels of TSH, or thyroid stimulating hormone. This hormone is sent by the pituitary gland to stimulate the thyroid to produce the thyroid hormone. A low-functioning thyroid will treat this "message" like spam, ignoring it—which means the pituitary gland will keep manufacturing more and more TSH. Ideally, your TSH levels should be less than 3; if they are higher, it could indicate a thyroid issue. Note that in Canada, the acceptable level for blood-value TSH is less than 5; but recently US endocrinologists have determined that levels under 3 are the best marker for a properly functioning thyroid, and all US mainstream and specialist labs have accepted this. It is hoped that Canadian labs will follow suit, but in the meantime you should still treat thyroid levels greater than 3 as a subclinical hypothyroid concern. If your TSH levels come back greater than 2, don't try to treat the problem yourself; you will need professional help to get your thyroid back under control.

What if TSH levels are normal?

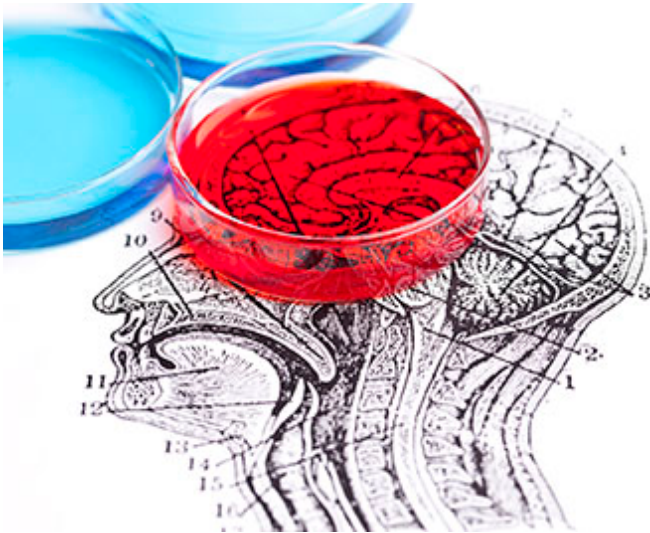
But if your TSH levels appear acceptable and you still suspect a thyroid issue, there are a few things you can do to optimize your thyroid health. First, avoid excessive consumption of foods from the brassica family—these are also known as cruciferous plants, and include cabbage, broccoli, mustard seed, and rapeseed. Although these are considered healthy "superfoods", they should be avoided or significantly reduced in your diet if your thyroid is compromised. Secondly, add seaweed to your diet; seaweed contains iodine and selenium, nutrients that are essential for adequate thyroid function.

Increasing your overall health is often a difficult journey, but your efforts might be blocked by issues like stress, cortisol overproduction, or a low-functioning thyroid. If you've yet to experience weight loss success despite hard work, check your thyroid levels and engage in stress and cortisol management—and get on your way to becoming a healthier you in 2014!



Primal Numbers

S.D. Livingston



Citizen Scientist

Have you ever imagined yourself stumbling across a rare scientific find? Maybe the fossilized missing link in human evolution, or proof that alien spaceships have visited Earth. Well, you might not discover something that exciting, but science has plenty of ways for you to contribute to ongoing studies. The only question is, should researchers really rely on the data from citizen scientists?

The idea of citizen scientists is nothing new. Backyard astronomers, storm trackers, and birdwatchers have been collecting and sharing data for centuries. The difference now is that,

instead of a few hundred birdwatchers sending sightings to a local club, the latest technology allows millions of people around the world to send real-time data to researchers in just about any field you can think of.

Like the [Weathermob app](#) that lets users track and report weather conditions from anywhere they go. Or [PHYLO](#), an online game that's much more than a fun time waster. It's hosted by McGill University, and is "a puzzle game that contributes to genetic disease research."

As this [CBC article](#) explains, there are dozens of other projects to take part in, including some for kids, like the home kits that let them "sift through actual sediment samples in search of fossilized shark teeth from the Atlantic coastal plain."

Getting people involved in research projects is a brilliant idea for plenty of reasons, especially with government cutbacks to scientific funding. But if the concept is going to fulfill its incredible potential, one simple fact has to stay front and centre: scientific results are only as good as the data going in, and that raises some big questions about quality control.

In some cases, like PHYLO, that isn't a problem. Data aren't being independently reported. And projects like [BOINC](#), an app from the Berkeley Open Infrastructure for Network Computing, let you lend your computer's processing power to a project you choose.

The potential downfall lies in observer-based data—things like reporting temperature, bee sightings, or fish at your local pond. Even with the best intentions, people make mistakes. Maybe they forget to record a sighting or write the temperature down wrong. There's always a certain margin for error in final results, but it's not hard to see how small inaccuracies, multiplied thousands of times, can skew results.

Ideally, researchers would verify the findings based on reliable data from another source. Say, checking citizen-reported temperatures against the ones from a national meteorological society. That's not always possible though, especially when observer-based data is the only source of info. Were there really 30 bluegills in that pond, and what are the odds they were actually red-ear sunfish? It can be hard to verify that kind of data.

Of course, trained researchers make mistakes too. And computer models can have one faulty calculation that throws an entire conclusion off. In science, as in everything else, there are no guarantees. At least, not until data has been checked and verified dozens of times. And that's a process that, while sometimes more difficult, is definitely doable with citizen science.

So yes, in spite of the potential drawbacks, the value of crowd-sourced data far outweighs them. It connects people to the discoveries and technology that shape our lives, helps researchers, and promotes the inquiring mindset that brought us things like the telescope and blood banks.

And maybe, just maybe, it will inspire the next young [Mary Anning](#) or Carl Sagan—and we'll discover an *Ichthyosaurus* on Mars.

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?



AUSU Call for Candidates

Every other year, AUSU holds its election to determine who the members of the next student council will be. These positions are part time for regular council members, but three of the elected members will be chosen from within the group to serve as the executive, the president, vice-president external and vice-president finance & administration. These three positions are considered full-time because of the number of meetings and work that are required of them.

The call for candidates is currently open (until Feb 2) and any AUSU member in good standing who has completed at least one AU course is allowed to run. You can find more information on how to nominate yourself [here](#). Positions on council are paid according to the work required.

Writer's Toolbox

Christina M. Frey



Bits and Pieces: A Primer on Parts of Speech, Part I: Nouns and Pronouns

Got a grammar or usage question? A quick Google search will yield helpful results. Or rather, they would be helpful—if you could understand them.

And that's the problem. It's difficult to improve your writing when you're unclear on the basics the Internet grammar gurus are presuming. You can hardly be expected to get excited about minutiae like the correct use of *who* or *whom* when your memory's drawing a blank at objective and subjective cases. And what was a preposition again?

If you're shaky on the basics of grammar and need a quick refresher (or a reference you can use as your online cheat sheet!), you'll want to follow this series that will pop up in the Toolbox from time to time. I'll try to jog your memory with clear definitions and descriptions of grammar basics and terms—in a way that will allow you to start using them with confidence yourself.

This week's Toolbox provides a quick primer on nouns and pronouns and how to recognize them.

Nouns: the basics

A noun is conventionally described as a person, place, or thing. "Thing" is very broad and includes intangible concepts or feelings (*love, embarrassment*) as well as tangible items (*table, building*).

Example A: Sarah went to the store and was shocked at the high prices. Here, the nouns are "Sarah" (a person), "store" (a place), and "prices" (a thing). Simple, right?

Nouns are often confused with the subject of the sentence—the thing or person who's performing the action in a sentence—but while nouns are usually an important part of the subject, subjects aren't limited to just the noun. Moreover, nouns occur elsewhere in sentences, too (for example, they might be the recipient of the action). That's beyond the scope of this week's primer, but the takeaway lesson here is this: **a noun is a person, place, or thing, and it can appear anywhere in a sentence.**

Example B: The exhausted student working on the computer is my sister, Sarah. The subject of the sentence is "The exhausted student working on the computer" (the so-called simple subject would be "student"), but there are four nouns in the sentence—"student", "computer", "sister", and "Sarah"—each playing its own role.

Pronouns: the basics

Pronouns are stand-ins, or replacements, for nouns. Usually we think of pronouns as words like *he*, *she*, *it*, and *they* (and all their forms), but there are other, less obvious pronouns: *who/whom*, *everyone*, *anyone*, *herself*, *each other*, *which*, and *those*, for example. In fact, there are eight different types or classes of pronouns; while some have specific rules that can trip up even experienced writers, you probably use most of them every day with barely a thought.

The noun to which the pronoun refers (or which it replaces) is called the **antecedent**.

Example C: *Sarah went to the store.*

Example D: *She went to the store.*

"Sarah" in Example C is the noun antecedent to the pronoun "She" in Example D.

Though we'll cover antecedents in more detail in the future, one rule you need to know now is that **pronouns must match, or agree with, their antecedents**. This means that if your antecedent is plural—more than one—the pronoun used to replace it must also be plural. Hence Examples E and F:

Example E: *Sarah, Amir, and Daria went to the store.*

Example F: *They went to the store.*

It also means that the pronoun needs to match the antecedent in nature. In Examples G and H, the pronoun changes so it reflects the nature of the antecedents:

Example G: *Sarah, Amir, and I went to the store.*

Example H: *We went to the store.*

That's it—nouns, pronouns, and antecedents in a nutshell. In future installments of the Toolbox we'll look at some common writing problems associated with noun and pronoun use (and the rules that even experienced editors need to double-check). But not to worry. Now that you've got the basics down, you're well on your way to being able to tackle them.

Christina M. Frey is a book editor and a lover of great writing. Chat with her on Twitter about all things literary @turntopage2.

Top 10 Reasons to Love the AUSU Student Planner/Handbook

Barbara Lehtiniemi



The middle of winter is a good time to make plans for the upcoming year. I like to ponder the year ahead, keep track of where I am now, and consider which courses to take next. So it was with great delight I received my *2014 Student Planner and AUSU Handbook* in the mail last week. Knowing how useful it was to me last year, I dove right in to the 2014 edition.

If you are an AU undergraduate student and you have not yet ordered your planner, I

encourage you to do so. Not only does it provide those essential week-by-week calendar pages, it is also full of helpful information on both AU and AUSU. A perfect accompaniment to your studies this year. Not convinced? Here are ten reasons to love the AUSU student planner/handbook:

1. **Free!** Let me say it again: Free! No fee, and no shipping or handling. If you are registered in an AU undergraduate course for credit, you can order your copy of the planner. For free.
2. **Spiral binding.** Lays flat on your desk and stays open to the page you want. Bonus: every bit of the planner is recyclable at the end of the year; see details on page 35.
3. **Information central.** Students will find perhaps the most information about AU found in any one printed document. "AU Departments", page 12.
4. **Online treasure.** Check out some online resources you might have overlooked: AU Press, Counselling Assessments, The Write Site, AU Landing, and more. "AU Online Finds", page 14.
5. **Free money, free services, free help.** Scholarships and bursaries from AUSU Awards; free products and services like Smart Draw software and lynda.com online training; student advocacy. "AUSU Services", page 18.
6. **Important dates and holidays.** Discover what dates AU will be closed this year, and learn the registration and extension deadlines. "Important Dates", page 40.
7. **Planner calendar pages.** Here's the meat of the planner. You get monthly overviews, weekly planning pages, plus pages for notes. Deadlines for course registration and extensions are noted, as are dates AU is closed. Common holidays in other provinces and notable days are marked (including Groundhog day, daylight savings, and phases of the moon.) Tips and quotes appear on the weekly pages to inform and entertain. "Calendar Pages", page 42.
8. **Citations and reference cheat sheets.** A quick guide to the most common styles, with general tips and lists of resources. Quick summaries for MLA, APA, and Chicago are included. "Citation Style Tips", page 228.

9. **Assignment log.** Keep track of when it's due, when you submitted it, and when you got it back. Track your in-progress grades for up to 11 courses. A grade conversion chart completes the section. GPA Tracking Sheets, page 238.
10. **Time zone maps.** Never get your tutor out of bed again. International and Canadian time zones, with UTC conversion for Canadian zones. "World Time Zone Maps", page 262.

The AU Student Union office still has a supply of 2014 planners available for AU undergraduate students (you must be enrolled in at least one AU undergraduate course for credit.) Go to www.ausu.org and follow the ordering instructions on the front page. Be sure to login to your AUSU member account and update your mailing address first, if necessary. Then watch your mailbox.

Barbara Lehtiniemi is a writer, photographer, and AU student. She lives on a windswept rural road in Eastern Ontario.

Click of the Wrist

This Sunday it's all about the game. Whether you're keen on sports, prefer the commercials, or just like the excuse to gorge on game day food, consider this your Super Bowl companion. Drag your laptop to the couch and click through these links while you're waiting for the next play:

The Football Code

So maybe football commentators aren't speaking in some secret code—but for many viewers, it certainly feels that way. Before the game begins, take a few minutes to reorient yourself with the NFL's primer "Beginner's Guide to Football." Alternatively, if you truly don't care about the game, The Oatmeal's [take on football](#) will give you a good laugh (and rile up your sports fan friends!).

Commercial Break

Super Bowl commercials are legendary for poignancy, outrageousness, and laugh-out-loud comedy. If you missed a good one when you got up to refill the chip bowl, catch up on the Super Bowl Commercials website. You can even search through the archives for your favourites from years gone by.

Snack Bar

For many of us, the real draw of Super Bowl Sunday is the food. The Food Network's Big Game Bash is your go-to resource for game day snack and party ideas. From traditional favorites (50 recipes for chicken wings!) to snacks with a twist (spiked salsa, anyone?), you're sure to find inspiration for your football feast. Vegetarian or looking for something off the beaten path? *Living Green* magazine's [recipes](#) are vegan-friendly and sure to impress your guests.

Super Bowl Companion



Mindful Bard

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

Wanda Waterman



Postcards From the Edge of No Exit

Film: [Mark Maron: Thinky Pain](#)

Director: Lance Bangs

The weird thing about being an American Jew is that underneath all of it . . . is this drumbeat that says: "You will go to Israel. You will love Israel. Israel was built for us. You will go there and love it and send it money and let it do whatever it wants to whoever it wants to, even if it's wrong."

- Mark Maron

I'm a great judger. I have shitty judgment, but I'm a great judger.

- Mark Maron

Mark Maron tells us about how as a kid he got nailed between the eyes with a baseball which he'd seen coming but to whose swiftly impending arrival he'd failed to react, even though it had been his responsibility to catch it.

He's doing this downstairs at the famous Village Gate in New York, playing to an audience of maybe a hundred young folks who clearly worship this 50-year-old who's so funny and yet so in touch with his existential loneliness. He doesn't try to hide this loneliness from himself or from us but necessarily buffers it with humour.

The incident inspires him to reach back into the past and perform a little psychodrama for our benefit. In it, he tells his young self, as he walks him off the field, that this one event will determine the course of his life. He maps out the future for young Mark (or "Fatty" as Coach screams at him): a long earthly sojourn of self-destruction, marginalization, rejection, and if he wants, creative expression (not that this last one will help).

He will no longer develop a sense of teamwork or admire anyone but broken losers like him. He will no longer put himself out there to be physically hurt, certainly not by ever playing baseball again. He will henceforth only be free to experience "thinky pain."

If you've ever experienced "thinky pain" you'd probably prefer to get struck in the face by a baseball. Judging by Mark's confessions, being consigned to a life of "thinky pain" is no picnic. But people like him no longer have that choice. The baseball has spoken. Case closed.

A gift to America in the tradition of Lenny Bruce and George Carlin, Mark Maron's brand of comedy is both confessional and socially engaged. He often uses the phrase "let's work through this stuff," which sounds self-indulgent, and maybe is, but there's so much vicarious catharsis involved in listening to him that he deserves to heal a little bit himself.

Mark lets you inside his brain just enough to enjoy it there. One can only guess at the pain inside him, a guess based on the simple fact of his being a comedian, but also on the sense of rejection and abandonment that he allows us to glimpse. Like the best comics in this tradition, he's a bit of a moral compass. The way he warns us about drug abuse, the dangers of "porn brain" (recent research actually backs him up on this), and materialism comes from the voice of experience (yes, he's always made all the wrong choices) rather than self-righteousness. And, although he says excesses of this kind are a bad idea, he does suggest that the wisdom gleaned thereby can come in handy. For example, when an overdose of pork fat makes his hand tingle, his drug experience tells him just to ride it out.

Another theme that keeps cropping up is commonality. Just when he thinks his goals are uniquely his own secret a perfect stranger will show him that he's not so special, that his innermost thoughts and desires are plainly obvious and easily understood. Like when he enters a record store looking for Beefheart because he wants to get caught up on what he couldn't understand back in the sixties; the young clerk knows where it is and even recommends the best album.

Maron touches on his relationship problems just enough to frame his loneliness and vulnerability. And of course we see ourselves in it and that's what makes it funny—and bearable—sucking some of the tension out of our failure anxieties.

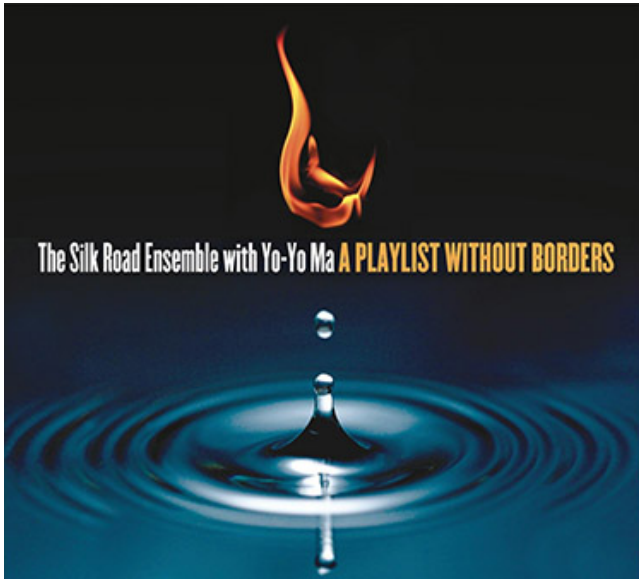
His comments on his own creative process are right up there with the hilarious method recounted by the composer Satie (who details a daily program wherein he schedules "bouts of inspiration" that last anywhere from three seconds to half an hour). Maron says he doesn't prepare but then pulls out his "system" of note-taking just to show that he's got a system he doesn't follow, a system made up with scraps of hotel stationery covered with handwriting he can't read. He calls it the system that's kept him "out of the big time for the last twenty years." The writing does no more than help him think and pull up ideas from within himself. It's a system that's doomed to fail unless a miracle happens, and that's the whole point.

Thinky Pain manifests six of the Mindful Bard's criteria or 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 endeavor;
4. It is about attainment of the true self;
5. It inspires an awareness of the sanctity of creation; and
6. It displays an engagement with and compassionate response to suffering.

Gregor's Bed

Wanda Waterman



Album: *A Playlist Without Borders*

Artist: Yo-Yo Ma with the Silk Road Ensemble

The new electronic independence re-creates the world in the image of a global village.

- Marshall McLuhan

Does the state of the world today sometimes get you down? Does the quest for world peace look more and more like a dark tunnel sparked with only phantom gleams? Is global awareness sucking all the joy out of your life? If the answer to any of these is yes, you need to hear this album.

Before you rebut that it's just music and won't solve anything, ask yourself if there's any point in sitting around moping about situations you can't control. Sure, do all you can to live in harmony with humanity and to compel your leaders to work toward peace. Then listen to this album.

This is the fifth album—and the 15-year anniversary album—of The Silk Road Ensemble, a 60-odd member musicians' collective from 24 different countries. It seems that for the musician of the future, being in “a” band is a bit *passé*; each of these musicians and composers is involved in a number of projects and each project seems engaged in the same intent: to root an aesthetic in a global consciousness without compromising the integrity of ethnic musical traditions. It's a prime example of a mission that could be summed up as using the creative stimulus of intercultural artistic dialogue to bring in a brave new world. And they've pretty much done that.

The sheer joy that this motley—and very spread out—crew of international artists clearly experiences in working up superlative compositions and performances is infectious, and the aural dishes are a savoury *mélange* of old and new.

The album starts out with a series of tracks called “Playlist for an Extreme Occasion,” composed by Vijay Iyer, a multi-talented pianist composer of Tamil origin but born and raised in New York. This playlist-within-a-playlist takes turns between spirited and vibrant, dissonant, and delicate. The title is a reference to a statement by famous literary theorist Edward W. Said, who said that in a classical performance there are “extreme occasions” in which music is written and performed with rare excellence.

Iyer says he used a kind of open-ended composition style for these tracks; he abstained from imposing a story on his work but rather provided a series of elements that the musicians could develop and fit together to create their own narrative. This seems to be an important characteristic of the new musical syncretism:

composers allowing musicians to take improvisation to a new level of expression by freeing them to interpret compositions according to their own traditions and sensibilities.

Pipa player Wu Man based the haunting “Night Thoughts” on a ninth century Buddhist pipa melody. She was also inspired by famous poem “A Quiet Night Thought,” written by Tang Dynasty poet Li Bai.

The four parts in “Cut the Rug,” written by David Bruce, are high points, too. The exuberant “Drag the Goat” is a reference to the Central Asian horseback game called Buzkashi, wherein horseback riders punt around a headless goat carcass.

This album is a kind of historical showcase of the state of serious music today. It appears that composers are now eagerly exploring not only different traditions, but the expressive potential of traditional instruments like the pipa, shakuhachi, jang-go, tabla, gaita, and sheng.

We must also give a nod to Mr. Ma for spearheading this project. This formidable musician is a gift to the globe, not just because of his superlative musician-ship, but because of a worldview informed by the liberal tradition. (Skirting the error of focusing all his time and strength on music alone, he pursued a traditional liberal arts education, graduating from Harvard University in 1976.) Truly a flower of humanity. May humanity be grateful.

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.

INTERNATIONAL NEWS DESK



At Home: Law Societies Arguing about Faith Based Law School

Trinity Western University is proposing a law program that could split the law profession across the country, reports the Globe and Mail. At issue is the university's policy against same-sex relations, in a time when issues surrounding equality are increasingly coming to litigation. In most provinces, law professors and practitioners are urging their provincial law society to reject any law degrees awarded by Trinity Western. If this happens, mobility agreements that law society's have created over the past decades could be in peril.

Around the World: DeVry Educates US Olympic Team

The New York times is reporting that DeVry has landed 15 students on the US national Olympic team going to the Sochi games in Russia. This stems from a partnership signed in 2011 with the U.S. Olympic Committee. US Athletes gain free tuition and the flexible hours that allow them to continue their training from the deal, and DeVry gets news announcements and publicity. For institutions having to compete in a global online marketplace, this seems like an excellent strategy to not only gain publicity for the public, but also a large amount of good-will. Fortunately, Canada's Olympic team has no such partnership already signed meaning that the same type of arrangement could be made to bring needed publicity and attention to Athabasca University. The question that remains is whether our university will take advantage of the opportunity before one of its online competitors does.



Dear
Barb

Barbara Godin

Dear Barb:

I am a 35 year old man with a wife and two young kids. I've been out of school since high school, working at dead end jobs. My wife works part time and is quite busy with the kids. I have mentioned to my wife that I would like to return to school and she was not very receptive to the idea. I know she is concerned about how we will manage financially while I am in school. I've tried to reassure her that we'll get through it, but she doesn't think I should do this right now.

I am considering Athabasca because of the flexibility they offer. I could do it on a part time basis while maintaining my job. My plan is to get my accounting degree and some day open my own accounting business. I really don't want to upset the family dynamics, but I know I won't be happy working in these low paying jobs. I don't know how I can reassure my wife that things will be okay. I know we will be better off financially if I return to school and get a better paying job and I will be a happier person. I love my wife and children very much and I want them to be happy. How can I reassure my wife that this is the best thing for our family?

Jay

Hey, Jay, thanks for your question.

I think your wife is just scared of the change you are proposing. She has her routine with her job and the children and is probably quite comfortable. You will have to show her that it is possible for you to return to school and still have a family life. Of course, you will be busy, but you can try to schedule your studies around your family activities. Perhaps when the children go to bed you can spend time on your schoolwork. Another option would be to enrol them in a half day program, which they would enjoy and thus giving you time to work on your school work. Also, you may be able to obtain some financial assistance through the university/college that you attend. Athabasca is a good choice, as you probably already know, since you have found your way to The Voice and are writing me. Athabasca caters to individuals in situations similar to yours. Where most university courses must be completed in one semester, approximately four months, courses taken through Athabasca can be completed in up to six months. Athabasca offers various services for students, you can find this information on the website under prospective students. I did a little research and discovered AU offers three different accounting programs depending on what you are hoping to accomplish. As well, if you are not sure what path you should pursue counselors are available to get you started.

I would suggest you take baby steps with your wife. Perhaps you can start out with just one course so you both can see how this is going to affect your lives. Then decide together whether this is something you can do as a family, without adding too much stress to your lives. It is important that you spend your life doing something that is rewarding, thus you will be a happier husband, father, and person. I believe your wife will see this if you give her the time she needs to adjust. Good luck with your studies Jay.

Email your questions to voice@voicemagazine.org. Some submissions may be edited for length or to protect confidentiality; your real name and location will never be printed. This column is for entertainment only. The author is not a professional counsellor and this column is not intended to take the place of professional advice.

Comic

Wanda Waterman

ANTBOY AND HAPPY RABBIT IN: PSYCHOPATH PICNIC

Hey, Antboy, we need your help with our annual Psychopath Picnic. We need servers with exoskeletons.



At last! A picnic where ants are welcome. But why psychopaths?

Dude, if we're just nice to them for one sunny afternoon and sing them Dylan songs and feed them hash brownies, maybe they'll develop some empathy!



I don't know what's more appalling— your optimism or your understanding of psychology.



WRITTEN BY WANDA WATERMAN

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

500 Energy Square - 10109 – 106 St NW - Edmonton AB - T5J 3L7
- Ph: 800.788.9041 ext. 2905 - Fax: 780.497.7003 attn: Voice Editor

Publisher Athabasca University Students' Union
Editor-In-Chief Tamra Ross
Managing Editor Karl Low

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

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