

THE VOICE

MAGAZINE

Vol 22 Issue 19 2014-05-09

Efficiency vs. Atrophy

A Dire Sit-uation

Mother's Day

The Darker Sides

You Are Here

Mindful Sci-Fi?

Plus:

*Music Review: Sergi Boal
The Writer's Toolbox
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.**

EDITORIAL

Karl Low

**Short Cuts**

DocZone over on CBC recently had an episode called "[Faking the Grade](#)" which examined cheating in post-secondary schools. One of the more alarming facts to come from this documentary was the estimate that at least 70% of university students cheated some time during their high school years, and that many continue to cheat all through their post-secondary schooling and further on in their careers.

Various reasons and justifications are given for this, including how competitive it's becoming to get into post-secondary can make refusing to cheat seem like self-defeating behavior when faced with competition that will. Or how a university degree is more often being seen as a type of certification rather than an education, so cheating is simply a shortcut to getting the piece of paper, not a failure to have received an education.

One cause that isn't explored, however, is how our entire education system is looking for short cuts. Businesses want trained people without having to do the training. Politicians want people educated without having to pay for it, which forces university administrations to want the same things. But the shortcuts that get taken to reach these goals, larger class sizes, standardized tests, do nothing to hinder students who might be tempted to cheat. Shortcuts are taken at the educational level as well, because it's a lot easier to create a course that tests for information retention rather than comprehension. And when a course consists of nothing more than one-way communications: lectures, readings, and the occasional exam, of course it's hard to see how this is providing an education. After all, if a course is just providing information, we could probably have just found it on the internet ourselves. And then there's short-cuts that teachers take. It doesn't take a lot of talking with students to find that there are some courses at AU where simply submitting any drivel with your name on it will net you a nice A- grade.

The best courses I've had were ones that had an oral final. I called my tutor, and we had a conversation. She asked me questions, some of them open-ended, and I answered as best I could, on the spot. Even if I'd wanted to cheat, doing so in that kind of situation is almost impossible. Of course, doing a course that way is the long way. There were no shortcuts available.

And speaking of shortcuts, you'll note that this is a short issue of *The Voice Magazine*. Creation of *The Voice Magazine* runs pretty close to the wire every week, so once in a while people run out of inspiration, or get delayed, or, in my own personal case, don't give interview subjects enough time to reply. And once in a very long while, this all comes together on the same week. But "Primal Numbers", "In Conversation", and "Meeting the Minds" should all be back next week.

This week however, in addition to most of our regular content, we also have our feature article from Tamra Ross who takes a look at why even as the number of people exercising, buying gym or yoga memberships goes up, so to do the number of health problems in our society. It's an article that will hopefully make you stand up and take notice. Or perhaps the other way around.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Karl', with a stylized, flowing script.

Inspiration from Outside the Box

Barbara Lehtiniemi



David Suzuki can't tell me what to do. His foundation is promoting its third annual "[30x30 Challenge](#)" this month. The challenge is a call to action for individuals to spend 30 minutes in nature for 30 days. Whether it's a local park, a nature trail, a beach, or a backyard, the point is to get outdoors. Participants have the option of completing pre- and post-challenge questionnaires on their physical health and mental well-being.

Many people routinely take walks to clear their mind, mull over a problem, or cool down

after an argument. Now research shows that regularly getting out into a natural setting also lowers blood pressure, reduces anxiety, and boosts immunity. According to this [Science Daily article](#), people who spend as little as 15 minutes a day in a natural setting experienced increased vitality and well-being.

What does this mean for students? Think of a nature break as an important investment in your education. *Hiking Research* says it best in their blog post, "[Five Ways You Can Prepare Your Brain for Success in 2014](#)", in which they quote studies that show spending time in nature can improve your ability to focus, enhance your creativity, increase your capacity for learning, improve your memory, and, perhaps most importantly, reduce stress. What other single thing can contribute so much to student success?

Do I need David Suzuki to remind me to go outside? I enjoy nature. I like the green of growing things, the stillness broken only by birdcalls and rustling leaves, and the earthy scents of woodland trails. I like the sun's warmth on my face, a cool breeze on my neck, and spongy soil underneath my feet.

There are more benefits to nature than those feeding the senses, however. Being out in nature often prompts physical activity that doesn't feel like real exercise. Many of us who work behind desks all day have to look for opportunities to get active. The gym is one solution but can be expensive and uninspiring. As runner Elliot Wagland says in this [Huffington Post article](#), "it's more enjoyable running through the seasons than alongside a sweaty person in the gym facing a brick wall." I haven't been in a gym for seven years but I can still recall the pungent bouquet of armpits and socks. Those aren't the scents of nature I prefer.

North Americans are spending more and more time indoors. As comfortable as our indoor spaces are, they are still manufactured environments. How can we feed our creative spirit and curiosity if we're cooped up in a box? Our imagination is constrained by the four walls of our voluntary prison. By freeing ourselves from our man-made boxes, we free ourselves from inspiration slumps and creativity blocks.

Some view David Suzuki as the saviour of Planet Earth, others view him as an alarmist tree-hugger. But as a student I can't ignore his recent pronouncement that "memory performance and attention span improve by 20% after spending an hour in nature."

I'm going to make the effort, and make the time, to get out from behind my desk and get outside every day in May, but not because David Suzuki said so. Some of my best inspirations and creative moments have occurred when I'm immersed in nature. And that genuinely is thinking outside the box.

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

INTERNATIONAL NEWS DESK

At Home and Abroad



At Home: University of Alberta gets \$10 million private donation

The Edmonton Journal has a [story](#) about how the University of Alberta has received a \$10 million dollar donation from Reza Nasser, the founder of Landmark Homes. Having emigrated to Canada from Iran in 1964, Nasser's donation is so that the University of Alberta can study ways of making residential construction greener, safer, and cheaper. It will go toward an endowment that will launch a school of Building Science and Engineering in Nasser's name.

Nasser's own company already has made efforts to create its buildings more sustainably by putting together whole sections of houses in his factory in Edmonton, and then assembling them on-site. U of A's dean of engineering, David Lynch, lauds this method of building, "Why in most cases do we build everything on-site over a period of months and months

in extreme weather conditions? ... If you can move a lot of those elements into an off-site modular construction approach, this is where engineering areas really perform."

While this sounds eminently reasonable, with donations of this size on the table, someone can always make the argument that the University is simply saying this to please its large donor. Even if there is no truth to the assertion, the concern cannot be wholly eliminated, which is why private funding of post-secondary institutions is something that should be looked at with extreme caution by our government, not wholesale encouragement and celebration.

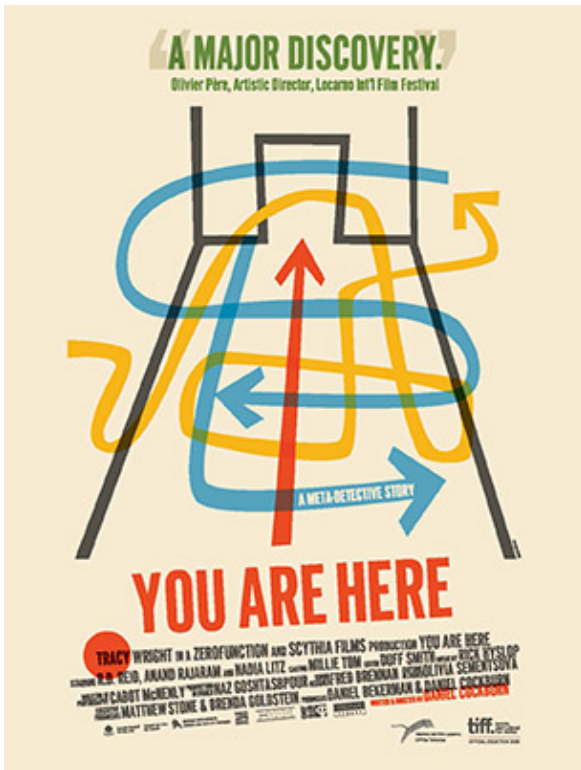
Around the Globe: South Carolina Threatens College Funding over LGBT Books

It's been [reported](#) in *The Guardian* that the South Carolina Legislature is moving to cut funding to two colleges for using materials that they described as pornographic and "forcing an agenda on teenagers." The funding cut of approximately \$70,000 and the legislature has been derided as "flat out hate masquerading as concern for public sensibility" and has a growing number of authors joining a campaign against government censorship of these books. Pulitzer prize winning Junot Diaz went on to say "our politicians are always looking for excuses to defund our educational systems and this gave them the added opportunity to bash a vulnerable community as well—which for them was sort of a jerkoff's two-for-one."

Mindful Bard

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

Wanda Waterman



Film: *You Are Here*

Director: Daniel Cockburn

**The Way to Elsewhere Has Been Removed,
But the Door Remains**

"Our tools are extensions of our purposes, and so we find it natural to make metaphorical attributions of intentionality to them; but I take it no philosophical ice is cut by such examples."
- John Searle

In a scene inspired by philosopher John Searle's Chinese Room experiment, a slovenly prisoner in a blue jumpsuit is sitting on the floor of a brightly lit room when a piece of paper bearing Chinese writing slides under the door. He picks it up and takes it to the desk, where sits a solitary red volume bearing the title *What to Do if They Shove Chinese Writing Under the Door*.

He opens the book and follows the instructions he finds in it, instructions that sound a lot like those found in bureaucratic forms, i.e. endless lists of contingencies (e.g. "if this character doesn't look like this, go to number 1590"). A shelf on the wall holds an encyclopedic row of these red volumes.

Later we see this same man, clean-shaven and wearing a business suit. He's holding a small model of the room he'd been in and calmly discussing the experiment he'd conducted on himself—coming off as a bit demented, as can be expected.

This is science fiction of the near future, so near in fact that it looks a lot like now. But then looking like now has long been a winning characteristic of the best science fiction, that small fraction of science fiction that can actually be classed as serious art and whose purpose is ultimately to tell us about ourselves. I say it looks like now, but that's a bit of an exaggeration. It actually looks like the 1970's, with big clunky cellphones and video players, analog everything, and no computers except one laptop that obviously doesn't belong.

Why set your film in an era known for tasteless clothes and cultural vapidty? It turns out to be quite appropriate, if only because this was the decade in which all the technology on which we now depend was slowly emerging, including, significantly, surveillance technology and archiving software.

You'll see surveillance, archiving, or both happening in every scene, and these are among the few elements tying all the subplots together.

The subplots are varied and interconnected but it's really hard to figure out which is the main plot or even if there is one. The film's official website suggests the main plot is that of the woman who archives data that appears almost magically in her path, but I have my doubts. You could say that the subplots form a kind of

collective which makes up the main plot; in the end everyone is having the same experience, like characters in a dream.

And the scenes have that strange quality of emotional coldness we often encounter in our dream characters. What's immediately striking is the degree to which all of these characters are *cut off*. Cut off from the people around them, from the past, from the future, from time, from their own true selves. One character, Allan, is actually a large number of people with the different identities but the same experiences and awareness.

As in dreams, consciousness here presents itself with a story, a story that's the product of both the conscious mind and the unconscious mind. But is the story believable? And can we trust consciousness to tell the story truthfully? Or to understand the story once it's told? And how do we define consciousness? If consciousness is awareness, does lack of awareness signify an absence of consciousness? Are we truly conscious if someone (or something) is deliberately keeping us in the dark?

It really doesn't matter if someone or something is keeping us in the dark because reality as a whole has blinded the human race since opening day. But a big part of the message of *You Are Here* might be that uncertainty is not the existential dilemma we perceive it to be, not something to be recorded, understood, stored, and used to make predictions and avoid all mistakes. Perhaps reality is like Rilke's princess disguised as a dragon, something beautiful that's waiting for us to act with truth and courage.

You can hardly listen to the radio these days without hearing something about how truly effective Big Brother has become in observing and chronicling our every move. When you hear about all the espionage going on, openly or covertly, you can't help but ask yourself, "What can they possibly do with all that information?" In the end, does recording and archiving every little event even serve any useful purpose?

But what if the system itself were self-contained? What if we could feed it enough information to make it intellectually independent, capable of deciding matters on its own? This is similar to the question as to whether computers can develop consciousness. To both questions the answer, for any thinking person, must be a resounding "no." Rooms and computers are both created by human beings as tools for human beings. They're not conscious, nor can they ever be except in science fiction where they serve as metaphors for reality.

So what do these metaphors say about reality? Basically the message is the same as in *The Matrix*: we're prisoners of any deception we choose to accept as true. In *You Are Here* the deception might be belief that once we get enough technology we can all be safe in our plain, dry little worlds. The passage to the world outside this environment, the world that can free us, the world we need to get to, has been taken away. But the door is still there. You can still pass through it and take what comes.

You Are Here manifests five of the Mindful Bard's criteria for films well worth seeing:

- It's authentic, original, and delightful.
- It poses and admirably responds to questions that have a direct bearing on my view of existence.
- It stimulates my mind.
- It's about attainment of the true self.
- It makes me appreciate that life is a complex and rare phenomena, 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.

Efficiency vs. Atrophy: Is the Chair Our Greatest Health Risk?

Tamra Ross



It took a NASA doctor to figure out that the key to good health is all about how we leverage gravity.

Most North Americans are conditioned to view gravity as the enemy. We visualize its disfiguring effects on our aging bodies: sagging skin, breasts, and other dangly parts; drooping eyelids and flapping jowls; stooped shoulders and slumped posture. Our aversion gravity is evident in our cultural devotion to furnishings designed to free us from the rigors of the constant tug toward the center of the earth: from form-fitting office chairs to reclining, plush Barcaloungers, we spend a fortune on furniture that accommodates our need to relax into a moulded cocoon of full-body support for most of the day. Whether we're watching TV, studying, or performing exacting work on an office computer, our bodies are as limp and free from exertion as if we were sleeping.

As we age, we increasingly adjust our environments to spare our bodies any unnecessary physical stress; we raise the washer and dryer so we don't have to bend and reach inside; two storey homes are traded in for bungalows to rid ourselves of stairs; we navigate the grocery store in a scooter to make sure our hearts and leg muscles aren't over-taxed; we can even purchase salad spinners and pepper grinders that use batteries to avoid having to use the smallest fraction of muscle strength for these everyday tasks. Products to make our lives easier are in constant demand.

Clearly there is a notion that sparing our bodies any undue stress will preserve us for a longer, healthier, more comfortable old age. Yet, 1 out of 5 Canadians (mostly women) suffers chronic pain ([CBC](#)), four out of five experience back pain at some point in their lives ([Chatelaine](#)), one in four Canadians (and one in ten children) are obese ([Obesity Network](#)), and heart disease, stroke, and diabetes (all preventable) account for more than 28% of all deaths in the country. The Heart and Stroke Foundation of Canada pulled no punches in 2013, with its new campaign, stating that most Canadians will spend the last 10 years of their lives battling preventable sickness and disease ([Make Health Last](#)). Clearly, all our efforts to improve our quality of life are failing miserably.

Dr. Vernikos' findings are that we're doing it wrong. Gravity is not the enemy. It's a necessity. Without it, our bodies soften, slump, and atrophy. This makes intuitive sense: in a fully supported, sleep-ready position, it's no surprise that our metabolisms slow down, inflammation increases, and digestion is sluggish. Our bodies are designed to reduce consumption when we're at rest.

As Director of NASA's life sciences division, Vernikos was tasked with studying the degenerative effects of long space flights on NASA astronauts, but it was NASA veteran John Glenn who noted that these effects were strikingly similar to the degeneration of old age that he was studying as part of a national commission on aging. Yet, Vernikos discovered that 77 year-old Glenn fared no better or worse after a long space mission than astronauts half his age. Clearly, age itself was not a contributing factor; the effects of prolonged inactivity cause rapid degeneration in people of all ages.

Vernikos' revolutionary finding is that the average North American's sedentary lifestyle is producing effects strikingly similar to those experienced by astronauts. By sitting for hours on end in a fully-supported position we're mimicking the effects of low gravity, and relaxing ourselves into an early grave. Astronauts recover because they resume an active lifestyle once back on terra firma, but most of us don't, and suffer the consequences.

This makes sense to me: many years ago I was suffering from a back injury sustained during moving. I failed to follow the standard advice about lifting, and twisted my back sharply while wrangling a heavy box into the back seat of a 2-door car. Two days later I was incapacitated by pain and learned that I'd badly crushed a disc. Going forward, I assiduously followed the advice of fitness instructors and doctors to sit out any exercises that might stress my back. After a couple of years my efforts led to a spine like a limp noodle, slumped posture, and chronic back pain. But when I decided to stop babying my back and took up weight lifting, focusing on lifts that used my back muscles (using moderate weights and carefully watching my form to avoid injury), my back pain was resolved in a matter of weeks. I've gotten lazy about working out since then and I'm back to square one, but at least I know why. It's not my body that's weak: it's my lifestyle. As Dr. Vernikos notes: "Astronauts, chosen on the basis of being the healthiest and the fittest—of possessing the 'right stuff'—are transformed by the lack of gravity in space into the likes of seniors thirty or forty years older" (Vernikos). Can it really be that simple?

Some may scoff, citing the preponderance of self-promoting scientists who espouse miracle cures for everything from cancer to leaking bladders, but Vernikos is far from a lone voice on this issue; cancer specialist David Agus ([The End of Illness, 2012](#)) blames excessive sitting for a variety of cancers and other medical conditions linked to chronic inflammation (he compares extended sitting to smoking in terms of the risk to human health), and The World Health Organisation has made the reduction of physical inactivity its number 3 target for improving global health ([WHO](#)).

This may not come as a surprise to most people, but what's new in Vernikos' and Agus' findings is the discovery that excessive sitting is dangerous even for people who work out on a regular basis: hiking on the weekend or visiting the gym a few times a week simply cannot counteract the damaging effects of spending too much time in a chair at a stretch.

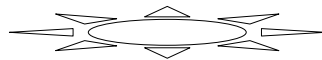
What's new in Vernikos' and Agus' findings is the discovery that excessive sitting is dangerous even for people who work out on a regular basis: hiking on the weekend or visiting the gym a few times a week simply cannot counteract the damaging effects

Consider that many of us now spend 7 to 8 hours a day in a chair (or car seat, etc.) at work all day, more time sitting to study, and we spend our relaxation hours on the sofa or in theatre seats. Adding it all up, you might be shocked to realize how many hours you sit at a stretch without standing or crossing the room. But wait – you may argue – office jobs have been commonplace for decades, well before the spike in the rate of diabetes and obesity, and television has been popular since the 40s. This is true, but we have to recognize how much these activities have changed in the last 10 to 20 years. The popularization of email is less than 20 years old and many offices didn't incorporate networking and paperless technologies until the last decade. Prior to the start of the millennium, office workers were much more active: a typical day required multiple trips to the copy or printer room, walking documents down the hall to be signed, dashing to the boss's office to take dictation, and numerous (sometimes strenuous) sojourns to the file room. Today, all of these tasks can be completed without leaving your chair. TV remote controls have been around longer, but until PVRs came into popular use (just in

the last few years), we had to contend with commercials, which allowed us a few minutes to get off the couch and do something. Tellingly, you can now purchase a sofa with an in-arm cup holder to accommodate larger drinks so you don't have to make a trip to the kitchen all evening.

There is no question that we're more sedentary than ever before, but knowing this doesn't solve the practical problem of how to counteract the damage caused by too much chair time. As Vernikos asserts, "people are more likely to preserve in a lifestyle change if they understand *why* what they do matters ... [as opposed to being told] *what* to do" (Vernikos). In the spirit of that sentiment, next week I will summarize some of Vernikos' findings about how sitting affects our bodies, and strategies for overcoming the cycle of atrophy.

Vernikos, Joan Ph.D., *Sitting Kills, Moving Heals: How simply everyday movement will prevent pain, illness, and early death – and exercise alone won't.*, Quill Driver Books, 2011



Writer's Toolbox

Christina M. Frey

Bits and Pieces: A Primer on Parts of Speech



Prepositional Phrases

Last week we returned to the grammar books for a quick refresher on prepositions. To briefly recap: prepositions are words that describe the relationship between a noun or pronoun (object) and another word in a sentence. Prepositions are almost always found in word groupings called prepositional phrases; this week we'll take a quick look at prepositional phrases and the roles they can play in sentences.

Prepositional phrases

The preposition is usually part of a **prepositional phrase**, which consists of the preposition, the noun or pronoun object, and any modifiers, or words describing the object (adverbs or adjectives). Once you've found a preposition and its object, you can easily figure out the rest of the prepositional phrase.

Example A: I left my wallet at the library. Here, the preposition is *at* and the object is *library*. *The* is a modifier, since it describes *library*, so the entire prepositional phrase is *at the library*.

Example B: The clock in the bedroom was my grandmother's. Here, the preposition is *in* and the object is *bedroom*. *The* is a modifier, since it describes *bedroom*, so the entire prepositional phrase is *in the bedroom*.

Prepositional phrases as parts of speech

Prepositional phrases are often used as parts of speech themselves. This sounds more complicated than it is. When you see a prepositional phrase, imagine circling it and pretending it's one word. What role is that word playing? That's the function the whole prepositional phrase is serving.

Example C: I left my wallet at the library. As we know from above, the prepositional phrase is *at the library*. Circling it and replacing it with an X standing in for the phrase gets us this: *I left my wallet X.*

Here, the X—the prepositional phrase—answers the question *where?*; it enhances our understanding of the verb *left*, so it's functioning as an adverb.

Let's try another one:

Example D: The clock in the bedroom was my grandmother's. The prepositional phrase is *in the bedroom*; replacing it with X gives us this: *The clock X was my grandmother's.*

What does the X do here? It describes the noun *clock*, so it's functioning as an adjective.

These examples show prepositional phrases functioning as adverbs and adjectives. Prepositional phrases can also stand in for nouns, but that type of construction is rarely used today.

Phrases within phrases

Sometimes you'll encounter multiple strings of prepositional phrases, including phrases within phrases. The best way to handle these is look at the outermost prepositional phrase first, analyze its function in the sentence, and then move inward to the next prepositional phrase.

Example E: I stepped around the puddle in the middle of the garden.

Stumped? The main prepositional phrase, which describes the verb *stepped*, is *around the puddle in the middle of the garden*. Isn't that three prepositions rather than one? Yes—but remember that a prepositional phrase contains a preposition, its object, and any modifiers. Prepositional phrases can act as modifiers—adjectives and adverbs—and here *in the middle of the garden* is a modifier of the object, *puddle*.

Moving inward, *in the middle of the garden* presents a similar situation. *In* is the preposition; *middle* is the object; and both *the* and *of the garden* are modifying, or describing, *middle*. *Of the garden* is a prepositional phrase functioning as an adjective; and of course it's a simple prepositional phrase in its own right.

Prepositional phrases can get still more complex, but unless you're taking a course in diagramming English sentences, you probably won't have cause to worry about them. For now, what's important is this: a prepositional phrase is made of the preposition, the object, and any modifiers, and these modifiers can include further prepositional phrases themselves.

Christina M. Frey is a book editor and a lover of great writing. Chat with her on Twitter about all things literary @turntopage2. Or visit her [website](#)

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My Days of Teaching

Having four-year-old Grady here for the weekend is good for one's innate sense of play. How else could I justify spending hours watching those cinematic marvels called Toy Story 1, 2 and 3? I appreciate the underlying innuendo and adult theme.

I can relive the early days of my own parenting through the featured toys. There's a certain satisfaction in telling Grady that his dad Greg used to own a slinky dog, pull telephone, etch-a-sketch. In an era of toddlers playing with smart phones and tablets I ache for the simpler days when toy soldiers, wooden blocks and connecting plastic monkeys demanded imagination—not mastering levels. Baby dolls, plastic animals, and toy trucks need a child to animate them.

Hilary still has her Mr. Potato Head. Even though we were eventually able to dispose of her troll collection, I smile when I see the pink haired beauty in a blue bikini that was her first acquisition in a supporting role in the movie.

Grady has now matured to the point that when I beat him at Snakes and Ladders he doesn't cry. He thinks one of his hockey trophies should be awarded to the winner.

We also spent time at our gravel pit where Grady climbed the piles like a mountain goat. The kid is extremely strong, wiry, athletic, and fearless. You don't get the nickname 'The Blur' on your hockey team by accident. He had a ball—and a day's quota of fresh air and exercise.

Next we headed down the road to the small creek about a mile from home. Tossing rocks into the water has been a fun activity for him ever since he could walk. With improved strength and aim the challenge for him is amped up. I wonder if either of us will ever learn to skip a stone. I pointed out deer tracks in the moist gravel on the road. On the way back to the truck I pointed out my footprints. I asked him if a mother deer would note my tracks to her baby.

The south side ditch was still iced over. I showed him how the dead dry grass had been frozen in place. We tried unsuccessfully to crack the ice with larger stones. We laughed at the sound of the rocks hitting and skidding harmlessly across the surface.

He also grabbed a branch of pussy willows and a fistful of rocks for my collection. He mistakes quantity for quality. Because he's not as discerning as I am they will never make the cut.

Because we got locked out of the house I had to show him the secret hiding spot for the spare key. I told him about keeping the secret from crooks and bad guys otherwise the old Star Wars toys might be the first things grabbed during a break-in. Naturally he pointed it out to his mom when she picked him up. Apparently my days of teaching him are far from over, from where I sit.

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

Click of the Wrist

This year marks the hundredth anniversary of Mother's Day. Cards and flowers are nice, but you know what will really impress Mom? Trivia about the holiday! Well, not really—but be sure to share these links with her:

How It All Began

What do pacifism and worker's rights have to do with Mother's Day? The National Women's History Project explains the history of the holiday—and the three women who inspired it.

For the Brits

If you've ever been confused about why your UK friends celebrate Mother's Day earlier in the spring, this quick history will bring you up to date. *The Week* also explains some unique Mother's Day customs you may never have heard of.

Dark History

At the end of her life, Anna Jarvis, the woman who'd done so much to make Mother's Day a national phenomenon, publicly disowned it. Disgusted with the commercialism that now surrounded the holiday, she even "actively lobbied the government to see it removed from the calendar."

Mommie Dearest

Did you know that Pandas usually give birth to two cubs—and only raise one? That hamsters are cannibalistic? *National Geographic* explains which animal moms are probably not in the running for Mother of the Year.

Where There's a Will



DID YOU KNOW?

AUSU Council Meeting



The new AUSU Council has decided that they will be holding their public meeting the second Wednesday of every month at 5:30pm MST. That means that this month, the meeting will be this coming Wednesday, May 14th.

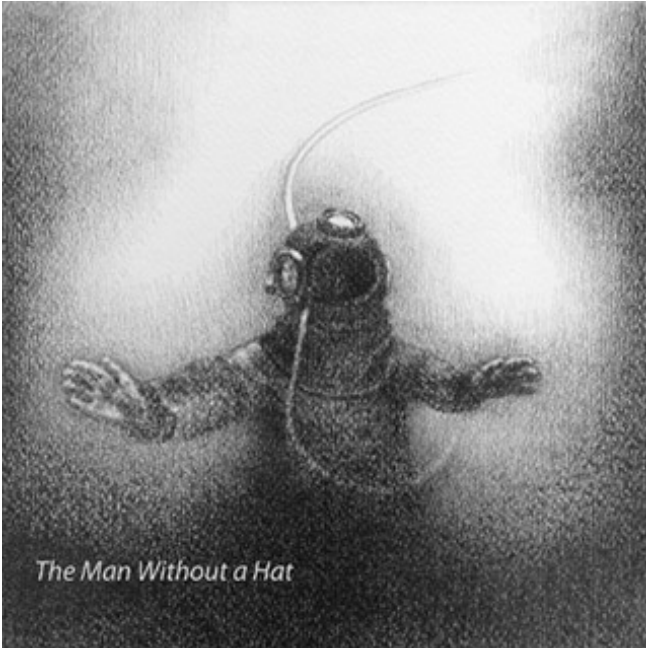
Any student who wishes is welcome to attend the meeting, and AUSU Council will often hold a post-meeting chat if a student has questions that they want to bring up directly to the group. These meetings can also be good opportunities to get some advance info on what is happening at AU.

For more information on attending this month's meeting, write to ausu@ausu.org.

Sergi Boal

The Man Without a Hat

Samantha Stevens



From the music producers Acustronica comes an album that will bring you on a journey deep within your imagination. Visionary Spanish musician Sergi Boal created *The Man Without a Hat* in his small studio, Nivol and Sound, in Barcelona, Spain. Released on May 3rd, 2014, this will be Sergi's fifth album. For fans of artists like Radiohead and Beck, *The Man Without a Hat* is an album that you don't want to miss.

Critically acclaimed internationally for his rhythmic and soulful guitar playing, Sergi's desire was to create an album that would take the listener on a journey without actually having to go anywhere. By incorporating his influences of classical guitar and flamenco music with subtle electronic effects, Sergi sought to challenge the limits of his musical ability. The result was an album that outshines many other electronic and experimental music albums.

Despite that fact that most of the tracks are only a couple of minutes long and the album is less than twenty minutes total, *The Man Without a Hat* is an auditory masterpiece. Each song evolves as it plays and no song ends the way it began. When listening to Sergi's music it's easy to get wrapped up in the sound. The combination of instruments and electronic enhancements not only forces your imagination to take over, but it is hard not to feel a sense of overwhelming emotion at times.

Sergi even named the songs as though they are chapters in a story. The song "Happy Loop" is aptly named and it will leave you feeling uplifted and, well, happy. The only downside to the album is that it is best listened to in the order it comes in. Sergi's intention with this album was to create a soundtrack to an imaginary film. However, the listener is the director and by shuffling the order of the songs a new imaginary film can be created.

Unlike other electronic music albums, *The Man Without a Hat* is not ambient music. The album not only deserves your full attention, it commands it. But since the album is only twenty minutes long, Sergi does provide the listener with the opportunity to take some time for themselves. This album is almost like a guided imagination vacation. Perhaps it can be useful when working on an assignment and you find yourself stuck on what to write next. Taking a couple of minutes to listen to this album will do wonders for the brain.

Perhaps Sergi was thinking that his audience will benefit greatly from such a break. The songs and titles do encourage your imagination to run wild. The song "Glacial" does make me imagine a wide-open, snow-covered landscape: each tiny bit of ice reflecting the sun, with the crunch of the snow under my feet. But don't worry, you won't get trapped in your imaginative world of auditory infused creation. The last song of the album, cleverly titled "You", gently pulls you back to reality, and the uplifting guitar playing seems to be bidding you farewell and thanks you for stopping by.

Samantha Stevens is an aspiring writer who loves combining her love for literature with photography, painting, music, and all creative pursuits.



*Dear
Barb*

Barbara Godin

Dear Barb:

I have just finished my first year of university where I was living in residence with two roommates. Over the course of the school year, one of my roommates and I became close friends. We often went out together as neither of us had boyfriends. At the end of the year Erin met a guy and they became serious fairly quickly. I did not meet him until a couple of weeks ago. The problem is I know that he was involved in a gay relationship a couple of years ago. I don't think he remembered who I was, so I didn't act like I remembered him.

Since then, Erin and I both moved back to our home towns to work summer jobs, so we probably won't see each other until school starts up in September, although we do talk on the phone. I can tell that she seems to be getting quite involved with Tim. When she talks about him, I just listen. I haven't mentioned anything about him being involved in this gay relationship as I'm not sure if she knows about Tim's previous life. I personally think this is something she should know and would probably want to know, but I'm not sure if I should tell her. I'm so confused!

Please help me to do the right thing.

Lisa.

Hi Lisa:

I really don't think you should volunteer this information unless it comes up in conversation or she specifically asks you about it. For example, if she happens to say that she has some concerns about Tim's sexual orientation, at this point it would be acceptable for you to disclose what you know. This is not the type of information partners can safely keep from one another. The truth will always find its way to the surface, especially since Tim was apparently involved in an openly gay relationship and not trying to hide it—after all, it sounds like you were only a casual acquaintance and were aware of this gay relationship.

Hopefully Erin and Tim have already discussed this issue, worked through it and are handling it in their own way. I feel if you decide to share this information with Erin without being prompted you may jeopardize your relationship with her. On the other hand if they have discussed Tim's sexual orientation, they may also have decided when and if they will share this information with family and friends. You are obviously a concerned friend and by the way who knows what the next school year will bring, a lot can happen over the summer.

Thanks for your question.

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

OVERHEARD

READY FOR THE APOCALYPSE

Why does everyone say television is an intellectual wasteland?



Because it is.



I beg to differ! Television is CRAWLING with useful information!



True. But television itself doesn't provide you with the means of distinguishing truth from lies. You need books for that.



Books! PSHAW! Why I've found the most important information of my life on television. Like how to be ready for the zombie apocalypse! And baby am I READY!

WRITTEN BY
WANDA
WATERMAN



AUSU
ATHABASCA UNIVERSITY
STUDENTS' UNION

AUSU Updates: A new council

On April 1, a new AUSU council took office to represent AU undergrads for the 2014-16 term. The last six weeks have been a busy time, as outgoing councillors prepared the new team to take office and facilitated an executive election.

We're pleased to announce your new student representatives:

President: Jason Nixon

VP External and Student Affairs: Kim Newsome

VP Finance and Administration: Corrina Green

Councillors: Bonita Arbeau, Megan Daigneault, Alexander Poulton, Christine Villeneuve, and Shawna Wasylyshyn.

At the changeover meeting on March 31 we said goodbye to members of the outgoing council, some of whom had served for multiple terms. We'd like to take this time to thank Toni Fox (outgoing President; 4 years on council); Bethany Tynes (outgoing VP External; 6 years on council); James Ramsbottom (councillor, 3 years), Ashley Charlton, and Craig French (both served 2 years).

The new team is already hard at work developing a project plan for the coming term year! See AUSU.org for more information and the Governance section for bios and pictures of your new team.

AUSU Awards - May Deadline



AUSU offers a range of awards, bursaries, and scholarships for our members. Some are available year round, but most are given out twice per year at our spring and fall application deadlines. The next deadline is May 1, so there is still time to get your application in.

Awards available for this deadline include:

- Academic Achievement Scholarships: recognizing excellence (\$1000).
- Overcoming Adversity Bursaries: a \$1000 bursary for students in financial need.
- Student Service Awards: a free course to recognize community involvement.
- Returning Student Awards: a free course for students returning to school.
- Balanced Student Awards: a free course for students balancing commitments.
- Christine Pannekoek Music Award: a free AU course for a student of music.

Also, these awards are available year round.

- Computer Bursaries: a free new laptop for students in financial need.
- Travel Bursaries: travel funding for symposiums, practicums, and convocation.
- Emergency Bursary: covers extension and exam fees for students experiencing hardship.

Tips for a successful application:

1. Don't wait until the last minute: you may need to obtain some documents that take a few days to arrive.
2. Fill out the form completely and legibly: incomplete forms will not be processed.
3. Read all instructions and submit the completed form to the correct email address (ausu@ausu.org).
4. If you have questions, call our office, but do not call AU. They cannot help you with AUSU awards.

All applications and instructions are on AUSU.org: select SERVICES then [STUDENT AWARDS](#).

Convocation travel information

AUSU wants to make sure this year's graduating class has a fantastic convocation. To make this happen, we're providing free transportation via bus or limo service to take people from Edmonton to the Athabasca Multiplex each day of convocation 2014. This applies to those graduating from AU undergraduate programs, and their guests (some limits may apply).

We've also arranged hotel discounts in both Edmonton and Athabasca (for Athabasca, you must book early and pay a deposit. Rooms in Edmonton are much easier to book).

Plus, if you stay at the Edmonton hotel where our discounts apply, the bus/car will pick you up right out front, and drop you off at your hotel after the ceremonies.

This service is provided exclusively by AUSU, but grads in some faculties may already be eligible for free transportation. Check your program website or the dean's office to find out.

For more information, contact ausu@ausu.org as soon as possible. We'll also send you a tip sheet with more information about travelling to Edmonton, getting to and from the airport, etc.

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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