

THE VOICE

MAGAZINE

Vol 22 Issue 45 2014-11-14

Minds We Meet

Interviewing Students Like You!

Right with November

Small Mercies

My Special Sister

The Problem with Helping

Plus:

*From Where I Sit
Council Connection
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**Managing Editor**

Karl Low

Regular Contributors

Hazel Anaka
Christina M. Frey
Barb Godin
Barbara Lehtiniemi
S.D. Livingston
Samantha Stevens
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 Meaning of a Magazine**

Lately I've been looking at other student publications and considering the similarities and differences between them and *The Voice Magazine*. One of the things that struck me was simply the amount of content that they manage to get each week, often from unpaid, volunteer writers. Now, *The Voice Magazine* is not exactly a slouch in this department, as, at 29 pages, this issue is larger than either the U of C's *The Gauntlet*, or U of A's most recently archived issue of *The Gateway*. But even with a higher page count, we're still slightly behind them in terms of different pieces of content, and far behind them on pieces that relate directly to AU student issues.

However, when I started looking at the content more carefully, I saw that a large portion of what you'll see at either of those papers is content that is local to their campus or specific region. Or sports team. And unless a student or somebody at AU decides to start up a pro-videogaming league (don't laugh too quickly, the most recent "DOTA" videogame championships had a prize pool of over ten million dollars) these are things that it's simply impossible for *The Voice* to cover. I'll admit, the thought that I won't, at

some point, be able to equal what those papers are doing was a bit depressing.

But then I had an epiphany of sorts, where I realized that I had forgot that *The Voice Magazine* isn't a student newspaper. It says so right in the title. It's a magazine. And that implies a different set of standards and a different goal than student newspapers. As a magazine, we need to concentrate not on just looking at what's happening today, or tomorrow, *the news* per se, but rather on trying to dig deeper and get to the meaning of these issues. That we have more pages but less individual pieces of content than other student newspapers is perfectly appropriate for a magazine. *The Voice Magazine* will never be a better student newspaper than *The Gauntlet*, *The Manitoban*, or whatever other student newspapers are out there. With AU students being so vastly different, in ages, locations, career and life experience, we simply don't have enough common ground for the typical type of coverage you'll find in a student newspaper to be relevant to all of us.

But stories that deal with larger issues, of life, of balancing career and studying, of optimism and isolation, stories that explore those issues are the things that can resonate with any AU student. And I'm hopeful that those are the type of articles I'll be able to bring you as we continue forward.

This week, for example, our own Barb Godin comes out from behind the advice desk and writes about an issue that many of us have had to deal with. What do you do when someone desperately needs help but refuses to take any, or even see the need? We also have articles looking at what's right about November, another instalment of *The Travelling Student*, and, not least by any means, our feature interview with fellow AU student Barry Wheeler in the latest *Minds We Meet*.

Plus, our regular assortment of columns on technology, writing, studying, film and music, and of course general advice. Plus this week, we not only have a Council Connection, but an interview with AUSU President Jason Nixon about how AUSU is going to continue moving forward after the recent staffing changes.

Enjoy the read!

A stylized, handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Karl'.

MINDS WE MEET



Barry Wheeler is an AU student from Corner Brook, NL. He's in the Bachelor of Professional Arts program, majoring in Governance, Law, and Management. Barry's got five more courses to go and hopes to complete his degree next year.

Barry was recently interviewed by The Voice Magazine about school, work, and community service.

Where exactly is Corner Brook?

It's on the west coast of Newfoundland. From St. John's, it's 701 kilometres; that's about an 8-hour drive for me.

Describe the path that led you to AU. What was it that made you realize you wanted to go back to school?

I was a bit of an overachiever in high school. But my Dad passed away when I was fifteen, and I couldn't afford to go to university. I worked for two years, then went to technical college. I did exceptionally well and, after getting my diploma in business and computers, I was hired by the college to run their computer department. I ended up teaching at the

college, and got my teachers' license. Now I'm working for the federal government. I needed to upgrade my education and AU was exactly what I was looking for. It fits.

What do you do like to do when you're not studying?

I volunteer with a local recreation group. We provide a slew of programs for youths, seniors, everybody. There's no charge for participants; we fundraise to cover costs. We have bingo, pumpkin carving, sock-hops for the kids, you name it. I also run a number of websites and blogs, covering such topics as community events, winter driving, and hockey. I run [Newfoundland Hockey Talk](#), which gets millions of page visits per month.

What are your plans for this education once you finish? How does it fit in with where you want to go?

It really helps in my current job—I've already gotten a promotion because of this education. Also, I'm getting close to retirement so I'm looking ahead to that. This degree will help me take on a bigger role in the community. Maybe a non-profit venture or maybe I'll get into politics; it will be something where I can give back to people—that's really important to me.

Who in your life had the greatest influence on your desire to learn?

I guess that would be my father. He never completed high school, and he had to work exceptionally hard to get the licensing he needed for his job. He really impressed on me that education is important.

What famous person, past or present, would you like to have lunch with, and why?

There are so many! I think I'd say John F. Kennedy. He really looked at things differently and didn't shy away from a challenge. He was a true leader and made some inspiring speeches. JFK did things that he thought would improve the world.

Describe your experience with online learning so far. What do you like? Dislike?

Online is ten times harder than sitting in a classroom. There's way more reading, and you have limited access to instructors. There's no interaction with other students, which is something that helps with learning. In the beginning I figured six months was ample time for a course but I find I'm cramming material in to get it covered in that amount of time. I also try to do a lot of the supplemental readings to give myself an edge—it really helps at exam time.

When was the point where you wavered the most about whether it was worth it to continue your schooling, and what made you decide to keep going?

It was when I was taking my last course, *Aboriginal Government and Law*. That was the toughest course I've ever done. It was a good course and, being First Nations myself, I was keenly interested in learning where First Nations are today. But it seemed no matter how much work I did, I couldn't achieve my desired grade. I set a pretty high standard for myself, and I ended up getting an extension so I could maintain my GPA. The tutor for this course was an amazing resource, but the course was just tough. I almost threw in the towel on that one.

What's your most memorable AU course so far, and why?

Same course: *Aboriginal Government and Law*, INST 426! I have a personal connection to the subject matter, and I wanted to know more about the plight and fight that First Nations are facing. Even though we're First Nations, we've often been treated like second class citizens. I certainly was aware of that growing up. I feel that if we as a community have better knowledge, we can have a better say.

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Describe the proudest moment in your life.

Two moments: the birth of each of my two children. It's an amazing experience bringing life into the world, to know that what you do influences the next generation. It's also an opportunity to learn about something that terrifies you!

What have you given up to go to AU that you regret the most? Was it worth it?

I haven't given up anything—that's why I like online studying. I structure my time so that I can still do all the things I did before. I still have time for work, volunteering, running a small business, and my hobbies. It takes more discipline and I definitely enjoy my free time that much more.

If you were the new president of AU, what would be your first project?

I'd probably address the situation around the learning services provided by tutors. These are the people students reach out to, so it's critical that tutors are responsive. I've had some great tutors and some terrible ones, too. The response time in some cases is really slow. I think some tutors find it easy to ignore students when they're not right in front of them. It would be easy to set up an automated response system whereby a student receives an e-mail to let them know their e-mail got through—not stuck in a spam folder—and will be

responded to. This also allows some tracking into response times so remedial action can take place when tutors aren't responding to students within a reasonable period.

Tutors are a student's lifeline. I'd like to bestow a sense of pride in the services they provide to students.

Describe your earliest memory.

It was winter and I was about 2 ½ years old. My sister and my first cousin were pulling me and another cousin around in a sleigh. It's a vivid memory. My mother couldn't believe that I remembered that far back, but my sister, who is older, remembers the occasion, too.

If you were trapped on an island, what three things would you bring?

A bottle (or bottles) of red wine. My guitar. And my wife. If we've got wine, music, and each other, we're set.

Describe one thing that distinguishes you from most other people.

One thing that freaks people out is my memory. I can recall things in explicit detail, even decades later. At meetings, I don't take notes because I retain it all.

I've had to teach myself that sometimes it's better to shut up and keep my opinion to myself. It's taken 15 years of practice to do this.

What is the most valuable lesson you have learned in life?

To know when to bite my tongue and shut my mouth. I like to share my opinion on any topic but sometimes that just leads to fruitless arguments. I've had to teach myself that sometimes it's better to shut up and keep my opinion to myself. It's taken 15 years of practice to do this.

What do you think about e-texts?

I'm old-school. Even though I'm a computer guy I still write everything out in longhand. I print everything out that I have to read. I find I can't retain the information online as well as paper—I can't concentrate. I even write my exams in longhand. I'm a two-fingered typist, so a 3-hour exam would take me 14 hours. I've got an exemption from AU so I do all my exams on paper. I figure a student shouldn't be penalized for not being a touch-typist.

Where has life taken you so far?

I've been to every Canadian province, and most of the eastern seaboard of the US. And I've been to Cuba, Mexico, and the Dominican Republic. I like experiencing the culture and lifestyle of the places I go to.

What (non-AU) book are you reading now?

I'm reading Bobby Orr's *My Story*. He's my all-time sports hero. My father was born in Boston, so growing up we could only cheer for Boston or Toronto. I got to meet Bobby Orr once. I'm a professional blogger and run the largest hockey discussion [website](#) in Atlantic Canada. I was approached about promoting Orr's upcoming visit to Corner Brook on my blog. I said sure, but only on the condition that I get to meet Orr during his visit. I did meet him, and I got to interview him for my blog.

The Bright Side of November

Barbara Lehtiniemi



I think November is in stiff competition with February as the most depressing month. It's not so much that it's getting colder. It's not the mention of the f-word (fl*rries) or even the s-word (sn*w.) It's the beginning of darkness: short days and deep dark nights.

With the return to standard time on November 2, for those areas who follow the daylight saving time nonsense each year, we seem to have plunged into darkness. On one day the daylight lingered into evening, and on the next day it was too gloomy to see my keyboard in the afternoon.

I make it a rule to try to find the positives in any situation, however dreary. Surely there must be some bright spots in gloomy November?

There are no mosquitoes. Why is it that we don't notice their absence as much as their presence? November, for me, marks the beginning of no bugs. No longer do I have to fan my hand to whisk away potential biters and stingers. There are few flying critters about; mosquitoes, wasps, and hornets have disappeared. There are no ants invading the sugar bowl. A few lazy ladybugs and opportunistic flies are trying to make my home their home for the winter, but other than that, we're just about bug-free.

A lull between seasonal work. In this area of Ontario, November is often—but not always—that period when neither lawn mower nor snow blower is needed. Although there's plenty of other work to do, there is still that holiday feeling that comes with the absence of some of those bigger chores that accompany summer and winter.

Working is no sweat. While much of the outdoor work ends with the first heavy frost, there are still a few outdoor chores waiting. Several cords of wood to be re-stacked near the door to be ready for winter use, gardens to be turned, bulbs to be planted, and outdoor furniture to be stored for the season. With temperatures barely above zero, we can work as hard as we want and never break a sweat.

The outdoors no longer distracts. Summer's siren song is long gone. It's hard to work indoors with the summer sun beckoning. In dreary November, I study with fewer distractions. I take more courses during the dull months, and plan a lighter course load for brilliant summer. Working at my studies through winter helps the time pass quickly, too. If it was pleasant outside all year, I'd never advance toward my degree.

Curling up in front of the fire. Dark evenings induce us to stay home more. This means more time to curl up with all those books I've been meaning to read. With a toasty fire blazing in the woodstove, the cold and dark are kept at bay.

Snow doesn't always mean snow. Tucked between the Ottawa and St. Lawrence Rivers, the easternmost point of Ontario is on the Snow Geese migratory highway. Twice a year hundreds of thousands of Snow Geese fill the skies in vast, disorganized flocks on their way between their northern breeding grounds and their wintering grounds. We look forward to the corn harvest in our rural area in November, because the leftovers in the fields

attract clouds of brilliant white geese. The incredible spectacle and the noise of thousands of geese gabbling all at once never fail to thrill us.

While we stacked wood this week, a brief cloud of snowflakes swirled around our heads. Although I dread the coming of winter, the first few flakes are a delight. It still seems impossible that we'll soon need boots and shovels, but that brief flurry reminded me that it's time to get prepared. And, while the time for me to look on the bright side of November is diminishing, there are yet days to savour.

If the dark does get me down, I'll just count the days until the winter solstice on December 21. Once we've passed that magic and dark date, every day gets longer—and lighter.

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

Click of the Wrist

November 15 is America Recycles Day, but the green activity shouldn't be limited to our neighbours to the south. These Canada-friendly resources will help you figure out what you need to do to help reduce waste by recycling wherever possible.

Recycle This!

Thumbs Up

What can you recycle? What needs to be disposed of in the trash? What's hazardous waste and must be brought to a special facility? This recycling guide answers frequently asked questions about a wide variety of products and materials. For a rundown on the various types of plastics, check out [this guide](#) as well.

Drop It Off

What are you trying to recycle? Where do you live? Plug the information into Earth911—or use the Quick Search—and you'll get plenty of options for recycling everything from button-cell batteries to Christmas trees.

Time to Recharge

Since it began over a decade ago, Call2Recycle has recycled over 7.8 million kg of batteries. After you watch the short orientation video, click through their site for more information on recycling the various types of batteries you have in your home. Drop-off (including locations across Canada) is completely free and is sponsored by hundreds of retailers and technology manufacturers.



My Special Sister

Barb Godin



My sister, Marion, is mentally ill! There I said it! The worst part is that I can't do anything to help her. I thought I would be able to listen to her ramblings and not get angry with her as everyone else in the family has. I managed to do it for a time, convincing myself this really isn't that bad. After all, she is lonely and needs someone to talk to. This is the least I can do for her. Unfortunately, I burn out. Marion's children and grandchildren don't speak to her any more, as she has accused all of them of stealing from her. In fact, she has managed to alienate almost every family member and friend she has ever had, and will not accept help from anyone. Out of sheer

frustration even social workers and caseworkers have "closed the book" on Marion. I often wonder how long she will be able to go on before she meets with a tragic end.

Marion lives in a small, dilapidated apartment in Hamilton, Ontario with her two cats, Lucky Loo and Miss Meowie. With the exception of cat hair everywhere, her apartment is fairly clean and orderly. However, Marion cannot see the hair because her eyesight is so bad. I have suggested she go to an optician to get her eyes checked numerous times, but she refuses, claiming she had her eyes checked years ago and the doctor said she has no lenses in her eyes, so there is nothing they can do for her. Weird! Yet I still I offer to take her to the optician, "No, Barb, I told you there is nothing they can do for me," she says, frustration screaming through her tight jaw and glazed eyes. I decided I'd better just let it go.

Marion spends most of the day without her dentures because they don't fit properly. I offer to take her to the dentist. "No, Barb, the dentist said there is nothing more he can do for me." I sigh with exasperation, wondering why someone would not want to try to help themselves

Marion weighs 80 pounds and looks weak and frail although she professes that she eats all the time. I ask what she eats. "The same things you eat." I know she can't be eating very much, but I am too fearful to say anything as I can feel her rage, simmering just below the surface, ready to erupt without notice. I don't want to be on the receiving end of her angry, paranoid behaviour again. An incident that occurred a month ago is still fresh in my mind. I was startled awake when my telephone rang at midnight. A police officer introduced himself asking if I was Marion Campbell's sister. Apparently they had received a complaint from Marion that I was harassing her. I proceed to describe in detail Marion's mental health issues. The Officer replied "Well that explains a lot." Following this event I was apprehensive to even call Marion in case she decided to press charges against me; after all, it's her word against mine. However a few days later Marion called, speaking to me as if nothing had happened. I ask her why she called the police. She said she didn't call the police. When I insist that she did call the police, she said that it must have been a seizure that made her do it. She blames her all erratic behaviour on her "seizures."

I live in a different city, so we communicate mostly through telephone conversations and the occasional letter. Lately the conversations have consisted mainly of Marion incessantly complaining to me about how awful her children treat her and that they never call or visit. I know this is not true and that her children have tried and

tried with her, but she is mean and verbally abusive to them. If I attempt to remind her of what she has said and done to them, her response is always the same, "No, Barb, that's not the way it is." She proceeds to tell me her version of the events, as she has rationalized them in her mentally ill mind.

She is crippled with osteoporosis as a result of the medications she has taken over the years. Marion is convinced the osteoporosis is because of a car accident she was involved in when she was sixteen years old, and also from falling on the cement floor in her apartment. I've repeatedly suggested we look into assisted living, but Marion says she has always lived by herself and she is perfectly fine. Again I remind her of her recent, numerous falls, and the fact that she cannot leave her apartment by herself because she is so unsteady. Her response is the same each time; she will be fine if only the pain would get better and if she could stop sleeping all day.

In spite of all her issues, she still asks my husband if he has any friends for her to date!

Some days I get so tired of hearing about how everything that happens to her is someone else's fault that I try to clarify the way things really are in the hopes that she will finally see the light, but she only becomes furious and swears at me or hangs up the phone and the cycle continues.

What a sad, tortured life. And, unfortunately, there is nothing in the world anyone can do for her. If I have learned anything through this situation it is that no matter how hard we try, there are some things in life we just have to accept.

Barbara Godin is a graduate of AU and writes the "Dear Barb" column. She lives in London, Ontario with her husband, two dogs, and one cat.

Student Sizzle

AU's Hot Social Media Topics

Following what's hot around AU's social media sites.



AthaU Facebook Group

Jessica wonders if many AU students are taking their degree at AU, as opposed to taking credits in support of degrees elsewhere. Gwenyth inquires how long a student can take a break from AU studies before having to be reassessed.

Other postings include the AU Library and courses ACCT 245, BIOL 235, FNCE 249, MGSC 301, and PSYC 387

AU Press Facebook Page

AU Press posts "It's university press week. Find out about the valuable contributions being made by great minds that don't think alike." <http://www.aaupnet.org/events-a-conferences/university-press-week/university-press-week-2014>

Twitter

[@AthabascaU](#) tweets about AU's 2014-2015 Writer in Residence, Anita Badami. <http://news.athabascau.ca/news/au-announces-2014-2015-writer-in-residence/>

[@AthabascaU](#) also tweets about two positions they're hiring for, a Collaborations Administrative Assistant <http://t.co/T9VXf04et5> and an Assistant Professor, Creative Writing <http://t.co/n4yJWzkkCD>

The Travelling Student Accidental Tourist

Philip Kirkbride



My name is Philip Kirkbride. I'm a college graduate from Ontario studying at AU. I've always wanted to do an exchange program or study abroad but never found the right time to do so. This is part six in the story of how Athabasca University has allowed me to create my own study abroad program. In part five we dropped off Annie the hitchhiker and while Matt did a quick oil change I ventured off to find a washroom in the historical Old Quebec City.

Matt. In a lot of ways Matt looked like an authentic Canadian lumberjack, 6'2" with big boots, a plaid pattern coat, and an SUV full of saw equipment. I like to think that he added to their experience.

As I walked through the church gates onto a narrow street there were several more tourists. It seemed like three or four tourists for every authentic Quebec resident. A group wearing matching red t-shirts ran by, stopping briefly to look at a sheet of paper. Likely tourists doing a scavenger hunt.

I had no idea where I was going but I figured if I walked in the direction that most people were coming and going from I would find something worth seeing eventually. The walk was slightly uphill but I could see a horizon approaching where the hill would stop. I started to get excited imagining that I would be in for an amazing view once the incline stopped.

I was not disappointed. When I reached the top there was a large statue surrounded by tourists and a few buskers. Behind the statue was an amazing view of the Vieux-Port (old port). Despite the name the port is still in use. There were hundreds of small personal boats as well as two giant cruise ships. To the right of the statue there was a giant beautiful building. I couldn't tell if it was government owned or just a very fancy hotel.

There happened to be a tour guide talking to a group of people only a few meters away so I walked over to listen. The guide explained that this was the famous Fairmont Le Chateau Frontenac. The site was originally used as a residence of the British colonial governors of Lower Canada and Quebec. Later the residence was demolished and an even more luxurious hotel was built on top of it. The Chateau Frontenac is considered to be the most photographed hotel in the world.

I probably would have taken a picture myself but at that moment I received a text from Matt "Where are you?" "On my way" I replied via text. But first I went to check out a building that seemed to be very popular. It ended up being a tourist center, but served for a quick washroom break. Soon enough I was back at the church and hopped into the car. After driving at a horse's pace, literally—we were behind a horse—we exited the city walls. Soon we were back on the highway with another five hours to go. I laid back into the passenger seat with a Tim Horton's sandwich in hand and wondered if we would find camp that night, and, just as important, where we would sleep.

An Interview with the AUSU President

Samantha Stevens



AUSU is a fantastic organization that is devoted to representing the student body of Athabasca University. Not only are they the relay between the university and the students, they also provide many services that are of benefit to students, and promote peer-to-peer support. In addition, AUSU also offer a variety of student awards and bursaries, and they are passionate about student advocacy.

Recently, Executive Director and Voice Editor-in-Chief Ms. Tamra Ross moved on from her position. Ms. Ross was instrumental in the creation of many of the services that AUSU provide.

Since Ms. Ross was so devoted to providing AU students with as much assistance as possible, and involved in many of AUSU's programs and services, I felt that it was important to touch bases with AUSU president Mr. Jason Nixon and discuss what these changes meant for AUSU and the services that they provide.

I understand that Ms. Ross was deeply involved in the creation of this year's student planner offered by AUSU. Is there plans to offer a similar planner to students next year?

AUSU's Member Engagement Committee (formally known as the Media Committee) is the main driver of the student's planner that is offered by AUSU every year. This year is no different than any other year and the committee has been hard at work developing the 2015 planner. The planner for next year is coming along nicely and on schedule. We anticipate it being available to our membership in December 2014 and throughout 2015 as always.

What can be expected in the upcoming planner?

Members can expect that bulk of this year's planner will be no different than any other year and will have to wait to get their planner in the mail to see what the committee came up with it.

It is my understanding that recently AUSU agreed to spend several thousand dollars to create a proposed succession plan. Was the plan complete before Ms. Ross moved on from her positions?

The component of the plan that helps with the immediate stabilization period after an Executive Director moves on is completed and has been implemented. AUSU is still working with our consultants to complete the second part which is a detailed plan that is being developed to determine AUSU's needs for the future and what AUSU's leadership needs are going to be in the future. This process is almost complete and will be utilized in the process we follow in the hiring process of a new Executive Director at AUSU.

Was the plan effective in minimizing disruption?

Yes the work that was done to build a plan for the stabilization of operations in the event of a departure of the Executive Director was effective in minimizing disruption. I am confident the work being done to plan for AUSU long term needs in leadership will also be effective in the hiring of a new Executive Director.

Does this recent development signify a larger change in direction for AUSU?

No, AUSU mission and mandate remains the same and will remain the same. AUSU will continue to work to provide top of the line services to our membership.

Will these recent developments affect the recently implemented health care program in any way?

No. The health care plan has been implemented and is fully operational.

Are there any other services offered by AUSU that can be expected to change? I am referring to services like lynda.com, the newsletter, SmartDraw, and student advocacy.

No other services are expected to be changed. AUSU will be operated as normal.

Finally, I understand that in the past, AUSU provided convocation assistance programs, like the bussing services offered to transport people from Edmonton to Athabasca to save them the cost of renting a vehicle. Are there any plans to change these programs?

No.

AUSU and AU students will miss Ms. Ross for all of her hard work and devotion to providing AU students with the best possible services available. AUSU will continue to provide AU students with as much help, programs, and services as they can, and work diligently into the future.

I would also like to thank Mr. Jason Nixon for taking the time out of his busy schedule to answer my questions.

DID YOU KNOW?**Benefits of Your University Degree**

A recent issue of the *Times Colonist* has an [article](#) about how university graduates in BC weathered the downturn better than those who hadn't graduated. Only five years after graduating, those students who graduated at the start of the recession in 2008 had an unemployment rate of only 4.7% where the national average was 6.6%, and over 95% of those students were employed in jobs that required their degree. Even the much maligned Arts and Sciences degree had better unemployment rates.

So if anybody ever questions you as to why you're taking a full degree, here's a very good reason that you can give them.



R_x Have Fun

When a person isn't quite feeling up to par but doesn't present with any handy-dandy recognizable symptoms either, there are two courses of action. One: Chalk up the malaise to getting older, utter some concerned tsk tsks, compare notes with your friends, and then promptly forget about it.

Two: Believe that things can always be better and you deserve more. Listen to the nagging clues your body may be offering. Be open minded enough to look beyond traditional medicine and accept help where you find it (like Eubie Blake said: If I'd have known I was going to live this long I'd have taken better care of myself).

I've been a proponent of both options. Of course, it's easier to seek out chiropractic, massage therapy, acupuncture, and more if you have the extended health coverage that makes it more affordable.

It was with this in mind that I sought out the expertise of a naturopath in February. I wanted an assessment of my health status. Tests showed I am carbohydrate intolerant and am dumping excess histamine as a result. Over time, through modifying diet and use of supplements, my numbers came much closer to where they should be.

That may or may not be interesting in and of itself. And of course I'm only offering a two-sentence summary of a complicated, months long process.

But, during a subsequent visit, in addition to new supplements, I got a 'prescription' to have fun. I realize that may sound hokey. It was only partly tongue in cheek. It was a reminder that having fun, laughing, relaxing, and taking everything less seriously could affect my wellbeing.

The challenge tickled my fancy and led me to the dollar store. I don't often wear my glasses/big nose/furry eyebrows prop but just having it on my desk makes me smile. I also opted for a tiny magic wand—who doesn't need one of those---that sits nearby in a pencil cup. I watch *Big Bang Theory* so I can laugh out loud several times in a half hour. I'm also working on a jigsaw puzzle, playing spider solitaire, and practicing yoga. Most of those things don't cost a thing other than the willingness to do them.

What is costing considerably more are the tickets to the Just for Laughs comedy tour that came to Edmonton on Sunday night. Four comedians, Demetri Martin, Jon Dore, Levi MacDougall, and Todd Glass had us laughing and engaged for a couple of hours. Naturally there were moments of insight as these characters gave us a look into their wacky perspectives. One talked about having been in a shitty neighbourhood. But then he wondered why on earth birds would choose to stay in that neighbourhood. That's a good question, isn't it? I'm not sure how many drugs do you have to take to think of that but hey, whatever it takes to make us laugh. I just wish I had a better memory (or they allowed recording devices). Unfortunately we can't store up laughs, from where I sit.

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

In Conversation With Steve Bell, Part I

Wanda Waterman



Steve Bell is a singer-songwriter, guitarist, and record producer from Winnipeg, Manitoba. After years of working with other artists, in 1989 he experienced a spiritual awakening, after which he created his own label—Signpost Music—for which he recorded fifteen solo albums. He's now marking the 25th anniversary of Signpost with a multi-disk recording project, a tour of Canada. A feature-length documentary is now being made about his life and career. He's won many awards, including two Junos. Recently he took the time to answer Wanda Waterman's questions about music, spirituality, and his latest recording project, Pilgrimage.

Which elements in your childhood and early years pointed you toward music?

My mother was, and is, a great musician. She taught us kids to sing and we toured around as a family gospel band from the mid-sixties to the mid-seventies.

Often in the evenings, my mom would sit down to the piano after her children went to bed and she would play for hours. She struggled a lot with anxiety and depression, and music was one way she coped. I would drift in and out of sleep, bathed in melodies (hymns, classics, Gershwin...). I suppose one could say that melody is my mother-tongue.

Which elements pointed you toward the kind of music that expresses and celebrates spirituality?

I've had a keen spiritual awareness for as long as I have memory. The ominous mystery of God has been a relentless "presence" in my life. And though I have never made a conscious commitment to writing about spiritual matters, it keeps coming up in songs simply because it dominates my horizon.

What is it about your character and background that makes it possible for you to devote so much time and energy to music and to communicating your deepest awareness?

I think you'll find with most artists that the work we do is work we're internally compelled to do. I'm not so sure it's a matter of character; I think it's a matter of compulsion.

Having said that, things have worked out; I have terrific staff who can take care of much of the practical details of a music business, which allows me lots of couch time to read, reflect, and respond. I'm very blessed that way.

What was your most beneficial educational experience? What or who in your training had the most—and best—influence on you, as a musician, a composer, and a human being?

I've told this story often, but never tire of the telling. My father was a prison chaplain when I was a boy. The inmates would use the chapel on Saturday afternoons to have jam sessions. When they found out I wanted to learn to play, I was invited into their circle and I spent many a happy Saturday afternoon learning my craft from federal prisoners.

This unexpected source of gift has profoundly shaped my view of humanity: that each, no matter what state in life, can conduit the gifts of God for the sake of others. I have since put out 18 albums and travelled the world over, in part because Canada's most unwanted men invested in me when I was a boy.

(to be continued . . .)

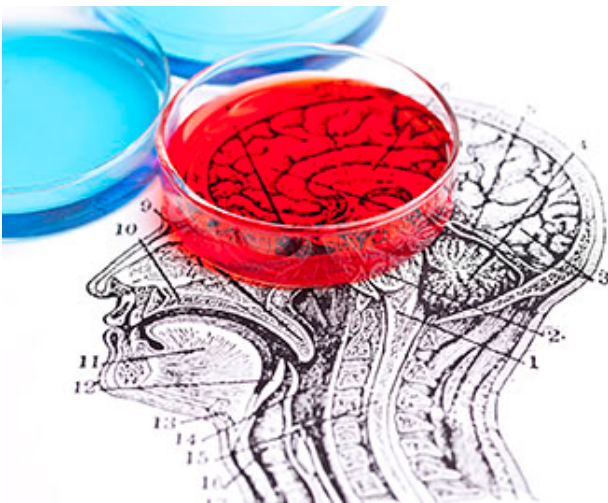
Wanda also penned the poems for the artist book They Tell My Tale to Children Now to Help Them to be Good, a collection of meditations on fairy tales, illustrated by artist Susan Malmstrom.



Primal Numbers

Ghost Brain

S.D. Livingston



We're always up for a good ghost story, aren't we? Whether it's the fictional spirits that visit Scrooge, or the rumours about that creepy old house in town, ghosts have fascinated us for centuries. Now, though, science has shown that ghosts are nothing more than a trick of the mind—which means they don't really exist. Or do they?

The ghost-busting research comes from scientists in Switzerland. As *The Telegraph* [reports](#), volunteers were blindfolded and asked to control "the movements of a jointed mechanical arm with their index fingers." The arm was placed behind them and would touch their backs when they operated it.

Fairly straightforward, until the scientists created a delay before the robot arm touched the volunteers. Without fail, the subjects reported feeling that "they were being watched, and touched, by one or more ghostly presences." Some were so upset by the sensation that they stopped the experiment.

There weren't any ghosts in the machine. But the experiment disrupted the brain's normal mechanisms for figuring out where it is in space—the automatic adjustments that tell you which way you're leaning, whether you're walking uphill, and how close other people are.

That disorientation was enough to make the volunteers sense two (or more) of themselves, which they described as an ethereal presence. Apparently, it's the same sort of disconnect that can happen when people are under great physical or emotional distress, such as mourning the death of a loved one, or have certain medical conditions like migraines or epilepsy.

In other words, ghosts, apparitions, and other spooky spirits are all in our heads.

But what about the countless stories of dogs, cats, and other animals that seem to react to ghostly doings? Like this one from the *Animal Planet* [site](#). Odds are good that not every single animal that barks or meows at an empty staircase is under physical or emotional stress.

Then there are the physical events, like items being moved or lights turning on and off, that have no connection to our brain function. Surely there's a supernatural force behind those.

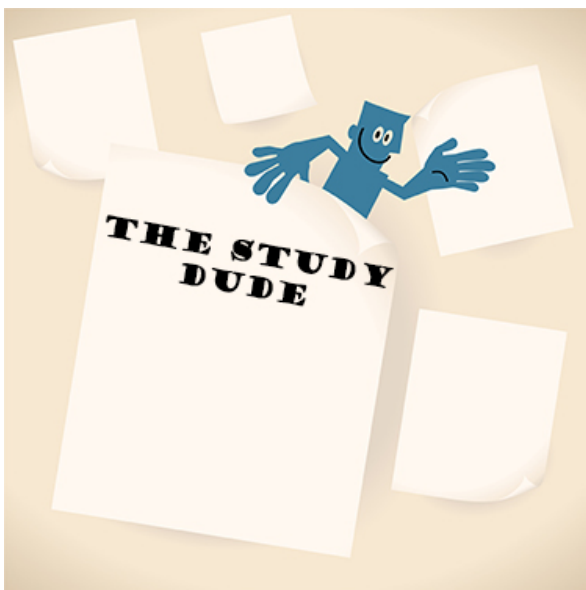
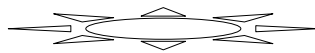
Well, no one can say for sure. At least not yet. But the fact is that even after thousands of years of civilization, there's absolutely no proof that ghosts or other so-called supernatural happenings are real. Plenty of anecdotes, yes. Verifiable proof, no.

Science, on the other hand, is getting closer to proving that they're not. We've got a long way to go, of course, in unlocking the mysteries of the brain. But there's a very good chance that future generations will one day look back and scoff at our primitive belief in things like ghosts and spirits.

Much the same way that thunder and lightning were once considered the antics of angry gods, we may soon have a perfectly rational explanation for things that, today, we put down to the lingering spirit of great-uncle Harry. The experiment by those Swiss researchers is a good start.

Still, that's no reason not to enjoy a good ghost story. Even if, one day, the genuine belief in spooks and spirits is no more real than Jacob Marley's ghost.

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.



Study Tips from a Semi-Anonymous Friend

There is nothing more that The Study Dude wants for you than to have an arsenal of writing tools that portend your rise into the bombastic world of classic authors.

Well, in these articles, as The Study Dude, I'll try to give you the study tips you need to help make your learning easier. I'll also give you straight and honest opinions and personal anecdotes—even the embarrassing ones that you wouldn't ever dare read about from any other study tip guru.

Today's study tips are based on a reading of *Writing Tools: 50 Essential Strategies for Every Writer* by Roy Peter Clark.

Strategies for Advancing Your Story, Adding Momentum to Your Writing

The Study Dude loves ideas for taking a piece of writing and sprinkling in suspense, rewards, answers, and movement—or should I say rewards, answers, movement, and suspense? All of these items add intrigue to a storyline (and order does matter!), turning even a dull report into a nonstop read.

Here are some of the strategies Clark (2006) divulges to rev your story engine into full gear:

- Add cliffhangers, especially at the end of a chapter, page, or section.
- Ending a piece with a question of what will happen next or what will the author/character do now is an effective means of garnering sentiments of anticipation.
- Foreshadow early on in the story, especially in a subtle manner that takes people by surprise. For instance, repeated visual of clocks could foreshadow (and serve as a motif) for the importance of time to the story's theme.
- In essays, determine what the ending of main point will be, and sprinkle in foreshadowing elements that allude to or foretell the outcome.
- Create a question that the story or essay is created to answer. The question serves as an engine for the story that is propelled forward by the unveiling of the answer.
- Place "gold coins" (tidbits that serve to delight the reader) periodically throughout your essay or story. These gold coins act as rewards to the reader. The reward could be a telling scene, an anecdote, startling fact, or powerful quote.

Write with The Ending in Mind—and Here is How to Dress Up the Finale

The Study Dude was stumped for effective ways to end an essay or report. Merely told to answer the questions, "So what?" in the ending, I never got a really solid explanation of what that meant or the various ways it could be achieved.

So, to enlighten you on this conundrum, here is Clark's (2006) insightful rendition on how to end your writing piece:

- It is important to make your ending so that it doesn't conform to a stereotype.
- Clark (2006) writes his essays and stories with the ending in mind.
- Ways to end the story include reflecting the beginning, tying back into something peculiar previously discussed in the story, using the end as a final tick in a time clock that paces the story, highlighting settings in the ending, dishing out a big reward or secret exposed in the end, providing closing on how character's life changes after the climax, expressing the solution to the proposed problem, summarizing story or exposition, and suggesting next steps.
- Try omitting the last paragraph to see if how it ends with the content prior to it is effective on its own. This will help you gauge if your ending is going on too long.

Use Parallelism and Repetition to Your Advantage

Parallelism, and most importantly, repetition are some of the key ingredients to those timeless, revered speeches that go down forever into the annals of history. Look at any of the most life-changing speeches of all time, and you will see how parallelism and repetition can turn something topical into something unforgettable.

The Study Dude thinks there is a similar speech waiting to be realized within you. Here are Clark's (2006) tips for making parallelism and repetition serve your craft:

- Try to balance individual words with individual words, phrases with phrases, and sentences with sentences in doing things like making lists or using multiple examples of words, etc., to describe something.
- Use parallel structures liberally in your writing.
- One neat example is to use is if statements end repetitively, ending each statement with the same words.
- Parallelism of three items with a twist at the end is an effective way to make memorable writing. For example, "boom, boom, boom" becomes "boom, boom, bang," ripe with a twist at the end that adds flavour and life to an otherwise humdrum expression.
- Repetition also adds spice. Choose thematic words or phrases to repeat.
- Three repetitions give a sense of wholeness, while two repetitions give a sense of comparison.
- If you think you might be repeating too frequently, omit some of the repetition and read the writing out loud to get a sense of whether it has improved in sound.
- Replace redundant quotes and phrases with repetition for more oomph.
- Repeating works because it helps us to "remember, to build an argument, to underscore emotion" (Clark, 2006, p. 163).

Skinny Down To Bare Essentials

When The Study Dude took a class on writing, the instructor crossed off over 75% of the writer's work, pared it down to bare bones, and told us that this was the meaning of conciseness. Much to my shock, the story read much better with the superfluous words chopped from the page.

Clark (2006) gets into even more detail on how to remove nonessential text:

- Remove sections that don't advance or address the main idea.
- Cut the weakest quotes and anecdotes.
- Pretend a tough teacher or a ruthless copy editor is about to tackle your project. What would you cut out to satisfy them?
- Cut excess phrases, words, and even syllables.
- Cut adverbs that intensify rather than modify.
- Cut prepositional phrases that just repeat what has been stated.
- Cut phrases that begin with verbs such as "should have to."
- Slice off abstract nouns that substitute for verbs, such as "judgement" for "judges."

So, there's nothing to fear. The Study Dude is determined to make right for you all the wrongs I made in grad school—one A+ at a time.

References

Clark, Roy Peter. (2006). *Writing Tools: 50 Essential Strategies for Every Writer*. New York, NY: Little, Brown, & Company.

The Mindful Bard

Listen Up Philip

Wanda Waterman



Film: *Listen Up Philip*

Director: Alex Ross Perry

The Splendid Isolation of the Ivory Tower (and its Hapless Victims)

"The need to feel superior, though common to all neuroses, must be stressed here because of its intrinsic association with detachment. The expressions 'ivory tower' and 'splendid isolation' are evidence that even in common parlance, detachment and superiority are almost invariably linked."

- Karen Horney in *Our Inner Conflicts*

"Look, it's nothing personal, but I'm really trying to do my best up here, and part of that means not getting involved with anybody—in a, say, a *human way*."

- Jason Schwartzman as Philip Friedman in *Listen Up Philip*

You may have known someone like this. They send messages that suggest: "You must put up with my dastardly ways because I'm so great and you are somehow less than me." When you refuse to go

along with this, the message then becomes: "You must put up with me because I've suffered so much."

Still not buying into it? The message then switches to: "If you won't put up with my evil ways I will reject and abandon you. If this hurts you and compels you to confront me angrily, I'll know that I was right to reject you."

If this person is a writer, what kind of literature can he or she possibly produce? How can people like this filter their observations accurately through this distorted view of reality? And if we've been reading and absorbing the work of such writers, what influence do they have on culture at large?

We need to put that question aside for minute and talk about the film, because despite the ponderous subject matter and the unpleasantness of the main characters, *Listen Up Philip* is a pleasant escape, specially designed to help you forget your own burdens for a couple of hours. The handhelds give it an intimate feel, it uses a tweedy autumnal palette, many of the props are from bygone technology, and the DVD cover is yummily retro—the font, design, and photo reminiscent of an early paperback edition of *Portnoy's Complaint* (you won't be surprised to learn that director Alex Ross Perry is a huge fan of Philip Roth).

A narrator gives us interesting takes on what's happening in the story, but what he says sounds like Philip (now waiting for his second "noteworthy" novel to be published) is living within his own novel, his thoughts, voiced in literary prose, revolving around himself like pigs around a trough. It's as if Philip's neurosis has poisoned the story from within.

Several characters let us know that Philip's novels are good, but judging from what he says in conversation we can't possibly want to read one. Jason Schwartzman as Philip Friedman delivers lines that sound badly written

until we realise that he's actually doing a masterful job of portraying a *poseur*, perhaps one of the most admirable *poseur* performances I've ever seen in a movie.

How does Schwartzman manage such a superlative performance in the role of a self-centred creative intellectual? Richard Brody opines in *The New Yorker*: "What's special about him is that he's perfect at playing intellectual artists because (may he forgive me for the label) he is one."

Right off the bat, Philip is not likable, and we know this unequivocally when we watch him proudly tell off a former college buddy who's now in a wheelchair, accusing his old friend of destroying the dreams of literary triumph they'd woven together. Philip is arrogant, egotistical, shallow, entitled, choking on his own bitterness and disappointment, and only concerned with himself and his career. (When a rival writer commits suicide, all he can think of is how he'd lost an opportunity to interview him: "I mean I'm glad he's dead and all, but doing that interview would have been a great opportunity.")

Older and more distinguished author, Ike Zimmerman, seems just the mentor Philip thinks he deserves. But we see in Ike just another Philip, older but no wiser, in love with the sound of his own voice, and acting as if every moment of his life were a Nobel acceptance speech. It's as if Philip dreamed Ike up in order to enable his own arseholery, and it looks like Ike was drawn to Philip because Philip's writing revealed a mind just as egotistical as his own, a mind with which his own mind could achieve an affirming symbiosis.

Ashly, Philip's girlfriend, is very similar to Philip in her devotion to her career, but when we see her trying to get the ground back under her feet after he sort-of-but-not-quite abandons her, we see ourselves—at least if we've ever had any kind of relationship with a narcissist. We see the same dynamic between Ike and his disagreeable but ultimately vulnerable daughter, Melanie, and can't help but channel all our sympathy to these two strong women who've had the misfortune of being involved in the lives of neurotic men. In relationships with narcissists, even other narcissists suffer.

The film employs an interesting technique in that the narrator offers an explanation that is so close to the viewpoint of the neurotic Philip, who can't see life objectively, that at times we can't buy it; it just doesn't jibe with what we're seeing on the screen.

The writer really must have hated or been hurt by a narcissist to devote a whole film to showing the relational dynamics engaged in by this personality type. But the value of the film has a greater scope. Yes, we need to ask ourselves if we are benefitting from giving room in our lives to narcissistic people. In the bigger picture, we need to scrutinise the contributions of narcissistic artists and ask what impact they might have on culture at large. Perhaps a bit broad for a masters thesis, but worth a bit of research.

Listen Up Philip manifests four of the Mindful Bard's criteria for films well worth seeing.

- It's authentic, original, and delightful.
- It provides respite from a sick and cruel world, a respite enabling me to renew myself for a return to mindful artistic endeavor.
- It displays an engagement with and compassionate response to suffering.
- 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.

Music Review

The Grayces: *Westing*

Samantha Stevens



Album: *Westing*

Artist: The Grayces

Released on October 14th, *Westing* is The Grayces second full-length album. The Nashville-based grunge psych-rock trio is best known for their powerful vocals, pounding drums, and throbbing bass lines. Compared to bands like Black Sabbath, Nirvana, and Queens of the Stone Age, The Grayces have captured the darker side of rock and tamed the sound to create music

that reminds me of both garage band rock and refined concert rock.

Since the band's inception, The Grayces have worked extremely hard at getting their music out there. The band released a self-titled vinyl in 2010, the single "Just Another Thing" in the Spring of 2011, and their first full-length album, *Social Shock*, later that same year. On top of producing albums, The Grayces have also been touring throughout the United States, and has won several awards over the years, including an award from the Canadian International Film Festival in 2012.

With Iz Stone singing the lead vocals and playing the guitar, Patrick Ward playing the bass and providing additional vocals, and Chase Cantrell on drums, The Grayces have created a sound that can only be described as formidable. Their music teeters on the line that separates rock and metal, with the occasional leaning towards either side. With the additional influences of grunge and punk, each song is different, and within each song, the style changes constantly.

I can't even begin to describe how much I love this album. If you are someone that is a fan of Black Sabbath, Nirvana, and other rock bands, then be sure to check out this album. However, if you typically aren't a fan of heavier rock then this album may not be for you. *Westing* is one of those albums that you either like or dislike. I find, with this type of music, there is rarely any grey area when it comes to musical tastes. But as a fan of rock, heavy rock, and metal, this album was a welcome reprieve from the pop music of today.

I could go on for days describing what I loved about each song, but don't worry I won't. I do have a few songs that I like more than the others. My favourite songs on this album are "Posthumous Fame", and "Walls of the Dead".

"Posthumous Fame" is dominated by the guitar and drums with sultry female vocals. What I liked most about this song was the guitar, which transcends mere playing and moves to a level of mastery that most musicians strive toward. At one point in the song, the singing and guitar sounds almost meld together to create an energy that jolts the senses better than any cup of coffee.

Meanwhile, "Walls of the Dead" has more of a heavy rock sound, but occasionally shifts into a metal inspired sound. The combination of male and female vocals creates a dynamic in the song that shifts from a perfect fusion of the two voices to the aggressive singing in the chorus. In fact, it is the singing in this song that make it one of my favourites on this album. The way the singing shifts from a perfect harmony to the burst of aggression describes the emotions that we all carry within ourselves, where at times we can carry on in perfect harmony with others, but sometimes those emotions burst forth in an uncontrolled eruption.

Each song on this album has something to offer. Whether it is the bass lines, dark lyrics, sultry singing, or masterful guitar playing, if you are a fan of rock music, be sure to check out this album.

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



Writer's Toolbox

Too Much

Christina M. Frey



"Two dollars."

"To the death."

"Too much."

To the ear they sound the same—but when written down, they can cause confusion and a whole lot of misspellings. This week we'll take a closer look at how to avoid making errors when using these three homophones (words that sound the same but are spelled differently): *two*, *to*, and *too*.

Two

The easiest of the three is *two*, which of course refers to the number unless you're taking the Amtrak to Toronto (the station code is the capitalized TWO). In most non-scientific situations, it's spelled out rather than written as a numeral.

Example A: I will be with you in two minutes.

To

To is used in two ways. First (and most commonly), it is a preposition whose meaning can be grossly oversimplified in terms of direction or location; you can often determine this use by asking the questions "Where?" and "To what?"

Example B: I directed my complaints to the board. (Where did you direct your complaints? To the board. To what? The board.)

Example C: I am going to the store. (Where are you going? To the store. To what? The store.)

Second, *to* can also be part of what is called the infinitive form of a verb: *to be*, *to play*, *to write*, *to be done*.

Example D: I hope to win the lottery someday. Here, *to* is part of the infinitive form of the verb *to win*.

This example combines the two. Note that both are spelled the same ("to"):

Example E: I want to go to the store. Here, the first *to* is part of the infinitive *to go*; the second, part of the prepositional phrase *to the store* (Go where? To the store. To what? The store).

Too

Too is an adverb, or a word that describes a verb, adjective (a word that describes a noun), or another adverb. *Too* is never used as a preposition; nor does it form part of an infinitive verb.

Example F: That pair of shoes costs too much for my budget. Here, *too* qualifies the adverb *much* (How much? Too much).

Don't be confused when *too* appears elsewhere than directly before the word it's describing. Regardless of its placement in the sentence, if it's modifying or qualifying or describing an adverb, adjective, or verb, then use *too*.

Example G: I, too, believe that the red shoes are too expensive. The first *too* qualifies the verb *believe* (Believe how? In what manner? Believe *too*); the second describes the adjective *expensive*. Both are adverbs, and both are spelled "too."

Mix and Match

Now that we have the definitions down, it's easy to distinguish among *to* and *two* and *too*. Remember this key rule: **To is never used by itself to describe, quantify, or qualify another word.** If you're trying to do that, use *too*. Otherwise, *to* is probably the right choice (unless you're talking about the number *two*).

Example H: I am too tired to attend the party. Here, we have a combination of the two: *too* is an adverb that qualifies the adjective *tired*, while *to* is part of the infinitive verb *to attend*.

Now for some errors:

Example I (Incorrect): Will you tell me if you're going too agree? Here, *to* is part of the infinitive *to win*; *too* is incorrect, since the word is not qualifying or describing anything.

Example I (Corrected): Will you tell me if you're going to agree?

Example J (Incorrect): I want to come to. Here, the first *to* is correct, as it's part of the infinitive *to come*; but the second *to* is not, since it describes the verb *come* and therefore should be the adverb *too*.

Example J (Corrected): I want to come too.

A final note: since *to*, *two*, and *too* are all legitimate words, don't rely on your spellchecker to make sure your spelling of these homophones is correct. Apply the general rule, ask how you're using the word and what its role is in the sentence, and you'll avoid confusing the three.

Christina M. Frey is a book editor, literary coach, and lover of great writing. For more tips and techniques for your toolbox, follow her on Twitter (@turntopage2) or visit her [blog](#).



Council Connection

Barbara Lehtiniemi

Wednesday's AUSU Council meeting was surprisingly short. That's actually a relief after last month's marathon meeting of over three hours, which I bailed out of halfway through. But the short meeting was unsatisfying for what was not discussed.

All council members were present November 12, and the meeting got underway promptly at 5:30pm. After the usual agenda and meeting minutes approvals were taken care of, council got down to business.

The sole action item on the agenda was a once-contentious change to Council Governance policy 2.08, which addresses council meeting attendance. This policy item was on the agenda for the October 8 meeting, but had been tabled after lengthy discussion. The intervening weeks must have worked some magic, because this time the updated policy was unanimously passed in less than 30 seconds.

The remainder of the regular meeting November 12 covered the usual slate of reports from individuals and committees. As a meeting observer, I find it frustrating that these reports are shared only among members of council. Although I can usually—but not for this meeting—get a copy of the meeting's agenda, the reports are not distributed. The contents of the reports are only revealed in the meeting if the person providing the report makes specific mention of an item, or if another council member asks a question.

It is to be hoped that AUSU is using their full page of space in this issue of *The Voice* to summarize its activities. Here's the little I gleaned from the discussion in the reports section of the meeting:

- AUSU has had regular meetings with AU's interim president Peter MacKinnon and will continue to meet with him monthly. The Student Success Centre has been one of the topics discussed in these meetings.
- The AUSU Health and Dental Plan went live October 15. No statistics are available yet but the plan seems to have been well received by students.
- Around 118 applications were received for AUSU Student Awards by the November 1 deadline. Of those, it appears that approximately 10% lack required documentation.
- Under the AUSU Computer Bursary program, AUSU has already given out 8 computers this year.
- The 2015 Student Planner is at the printers. The office is already receiving inquiries about the availability of the planners.

The meeting, or more specifically the regular meeting, was adjourned at 6:00pm. Meeting observers were asked to depart so that council members could hold a closed meeting.

The topic of the closed meeting was not divulged, but one might expect that it relates to the abrupt—and unexplained—departure of former AUSU Executive Director, Tamra Ross. Other than a tersely worded statement, unsigned but presumably from AUSU Council President Jason Nixon, in *The Voice Magazine* October 31, no information has been forthcoming.

So while I'm pleased that the AUSU Council meeting I attended Wednesday was short and smooth, I feel a bit short-changed. I hope the information vacuum will be remedied. With few exceptions, AUSU members deserve to know everything that goes on at council. I'm looking forward to the next AUSU update in *The Voice Magazine*, or the next Executive Blog Update on <http://www.ausu.org/>.



*Dear
Barb*

Barbara Godin

Judging a Book by its Cover

Dear Barb:

I have been married for two years. Before we were married my husband was outgoing and friendly with my family and friends. Since we got married he doesn't want to visit family and when he does join me he sits in the corner and watches TV. People are asking me what's wrong with him. I'm embarrassed by him and don't want to bring him to any events for fear I will be judged because of his bad behaviour. I have tried talking to him to find out if there is something wrong, but he says no, he just doesn't feel like talking. Why would someone just change so suddenly?

Dawn

Hi Dawn:

Your husband's behaviour is not a reflection of you. If he chooses not to socialize, that is his choice. You are your own person and only responsible for your behaviour. However it does seem odd that there would be such a shift in his personality. Are you sure he has not become depressed, or something happened at work that is bothering him? Have you discussed this with his family members? Perhaps there is a history of depression in his background, or possibly he was putting on an act before you were married and now he is feeling relaxed enough to be himself. Either way he is your husband and you will have to accept him as he is. Thanks for your question Dawn.

Dear Barb:

My friend and I are voracious readers. We love all kinds of books and we often exchange books. Lately Katherine has not returned the books I have given her. I keep asking her if she has read them and she says she hasn't gotten around to it yet, but I know she has been reading other books. She didn't specifically ask to read the books I loaned her, but I know what kind of books she likes and that's why I gave them to her. My feelings are hurt and I really don't want to lend any more books to her if she doesn't read them anyway! Why are some people so insensitive? Thanks Gina.

Hi Gina:

Reading is a great pastime, I love it too! If your friend didn't specifically ask to borrow a particular book, then you probably shouldn't have given it to her. She obviously has other books that she has on her reading list that she prefers to read at this time. In order to avoid this from happening in the future, wait for your friend to ask to borrow a book or when you read a book that you think she will enjoy, tell her about it and let her know that it is available for her to borrow when she is ready. I don't think she is being insensitive, she just prefers to read at her pace and not yours. Happy reading Gina.

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





AUSU
ATHABASCA UNIVERSITY
STUDENTS' UNION

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Featured AUSU Member Service: Awards

AUSU offers a variety of scholarships, awards, and bursaries for members. Here are some with a pending application deadline of **November 1**:

Academic Achievement Scholarships reward scholastic excellence. The applicant with the highest GPA over the last thirty credits will receive the award.

Overcoming Adversity Bursaries help students in financial need. Special consideration is given to those who have other challenges such as disabilities, single parenting, and extraordinary financial concerns.

Returning Student Awards recognize the commitment of students who return to university after a long break.

Balanced Student Awards reward students who balance multiple life commitments with university study.

Student Service Awards recognize those who provide outstanding support to students or their community.

For more information on these and our other awards (the Emergency, Computer, and Travel Bursary), visit the [AUSU awards page](#).

AUSU Featured Groups & Clubs

Group Name: **AU - Bachelor of Commerce**

Where: **Facebook**

Members: 171

About: Members are typically B.Comm students or students taking business courses. The members of the group typically discuss their views and tips on courses.
Activity: Active several times a week but not daily.

Great AU Finds Online

Counselling Assessments – Am I Ready for studies in ...?
Counselling Assessments – A series of review modules to test your skill in a variety of subjects (currently there are assessments for English, math, chemistry, Microsoft Access, and computing science). Use these to determine if you need to brush up on a subject before diving in to a

IMPORTANT DATES

- Nov 28: Last business to extend courses ending Dec 31
- Dec 10: registration deadline for a Jan 1 start date
- Dec 10: AUSU council meeting

course, or just for fun. Also, Mapping Your Future helps you choose an occupation.

For links, see:

http://counselling.athabascau.ca/assess_yourself.php



This Week at lynda.com

lynda.com experts have curated playlists to get you started. With hundreds of lists on a variety of subjects, there is something for everyone. Visit the playlist center for more information and enter the playlist title. This week's featured list:

Master Office 2013

Microsoft Office products are needed for almost every AU course. Mastery of these products is not only beneficial to your schooling, but also for many jobs. Although using the most basic functions of Word and Excel is almost intuitive, there are so many other functions that that can help you put out superior work. Take the time to get to know your tools. Use Lynda.com.

- Office 2013 New Features
- Excel 2013 Essential Training
- Word 2013 Essential Training
- Outlook 2013 Essential Training
- PowerPoint 2013 Essential Training
- Up and Running with Office 365
- Up and Running with Lync Online

Courses: 7

Duration: 24h 8m

Skill Level: Beginner

Have you signed up for lynda? It's free for AUSU members. To learn more, check out ausu.org/services/lynda.php

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: 855.497.7003 - Fax: 780.497.7003 attn: Voice Editor

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

Regular Columnists Hazel Anaka, Barbara Lehtiniemi, S.D. Livingston,
Wanda Waterman, Barb Godin, Christina Frey,
Samantha Stevens

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