

# THE VOICE

## MAGAZINE

Vol 23 Issue 02 2015-01-09

## The Crib of Normal

Define your Normal

## Dusting off New Years

Some Help for your Resolutions

## The Study Dude

The Dissertation Journey

**Plus:**

*Borscht, Part II*

*The Mindful Bard*

*and much more!*



# CONTENTS

*The Voice's* interactive Table of Contents allows you to click a story title to jump to an article. Clicking the bottom right corner of any page returns you here. Some ads and graphics are also links.

## Features

The Crib of Normal ..... 5

## Articles

Editorial: *The Social and Cultural Significance of Borscht, Part II* ..... 3  
Dusting off a Fresh New Year ..... 7  
Five Tips for your New Year's Resolution ..... 19

## Columns

Primal Numbers: *Forty Winks*..... 8  
Mindful Bard: *Congress* ..... 10  
The Travelling Student: *Pulling the Cord*..... 12  
Music Review: *Another Green World* ..... 14  
The Writer's Toolbox: *In Brief, Part I*..... 15  
The Career Path: *Get Rich Click* ..... 16  
The Study Dude: *The Dissertation Journey*..... 20  
Dear Barb: *Dealing with the (New) Years*..... 23

## News and Events

Student Sizzle..... 9  
Did You Know?..... 13  
Click of the Wrist ..... 18  
AUSU Update..... 25

## Comic

Commandante Fartetado: *A Punishable Crime* ..... 24

***The Voice  
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# LETTERS TO THE EDITOR



**We love to hear from you! Send your questions and comments to [voice@voicemagazine.org](mailto:voice@voicemagazine.org), and please indicate if we may publish your letter.**

## EDITORIAL

Karl Low

**The Social and Cultural Significance of Borscht, Part II**

(aka Sometimes it is terrorism. So what?)

An unhappy coincidence, the week after we reprint my first editorial about terrorism, we have the attacks on Charlie Hebdo in Paris. Where, in case you've been avoiding all other news media, 11 people were gunned down by two individuals inside the publishing offices of a newspaper that printed controversial cartoon depictions of the prophet Mohammed, and one police officer shot and killed outside the offices by the same two.

This has resulted in breathless coverage about the massive manhunt for the two attackers, and in case there's any doubt, these were definitely terrorist activities in my mind, they meet the threefold criteria: a well-organized attack, primarily against civilians, and with the goal of changing our behavior in future (to wit, to make us fearful of publishing such pictures). That they've failed spectacularly in that goal, as more outlets now are publishing the pictures than ever did before, is irrelevant to whether the act should be considered terrorism.

The response has been dramatic, with a massive police presence descending on the city to search for these two, and the news media reporting on every aspect of the hunt. But what, I find myself asking, makes this so terribly different from any other mass attack that we've seen over the last several years? In 2006, there were eight men connected to a motorcycle club that were gunned down and found in a farmer's field. Is that crime more or less heinous? Recently in Edmonton, eight more people were killed by a suicidal man, who was also found dead the next day. But what is it about attaching the label "terrorism" to the crime that makes it so much worse? Some might argue that it's because of the manhunt that it's received so much global coverage, but had these been suicide bombers instead, I somehow expect the coverage would have been very similar.

This coverage includes the Prime Minister of Canada and the leaders of all the parties in opposition statements condemning the act. So has the President of the United States. Nobody in Paris condemned Phu Lam for his recent slaughter of eight people in Canada. The President of the United States did not comment on Matthew De Grood's murder of five people in Calgary, even though Canada is his nation's nearest neighbour. Remember, part of what makes it terrorism is that it has a goal of trying to change how we live. So what would happen if we simply didn't talk about it? What if, when asked about terrorist activities in other countries, our leaders treated the actions with the same amount of concern as they do any other mass murder instead of launching into highly charged polemic about declarations of war.

Paris, and also Canada, are on record as saying that they will refuse to negotiate with terrorists for hostages, knowing that doing so only fuels more hostage taking. If publicity is one of the goals of terrorism, then surely providing larger publicity for terrorist acts than any other crime serves to encourage it. Why hasn't our government decided that similar restrictions be in place when it comes to terrorist activity? Why do our government leaders reward terrorists by giving them increased standing on the world stage? If the safety of citizens is truly the main goal, then it seems to me that our approach to terrorism is simply backward.

On another note, while I was watching the coverage, I commented that at least writers and cartoonists for The Voice Magazine are afforded some relative safety by the distance nature of our publication. The only address you'll



be able to find for The Voice is the head office in Edmonton, a city some 300 miles distant from me, and the writers are equally spread out, both across the country, and even around the globe. There simply isn't anything to attack. It may be that papers which take it on themselves to publish controversial material (and I applaud Charlie Hebdo for doing so, because questioning the status quo is the only way we can find ways to improve on it) should consider adopting the distributed model of publishing. As the ease of distance communication increases, there become fewer impediments to being able to prevent these type of mass attacks from ever happening in the first place. Who knows, it may even come to be the new normal of publishing.

And while speaking of a new normal, this week we have a new article from Jason Sullivan that looks exactly at that issue of defining what is and isn't normal for us as individuals and as a society. We also have a plethora of New Year's Resolution advice, and a selection of our ever insightful and individual book, film, music, and technology reviews. Unfortunately, we do not have a From Where I Sit this week, but there is nothing to worry about, as Hazel assures me it will be back next week, after she's shaken off the last of the cobwebs from what I can only assume was an excellent New Year's celebration.

Finally, I want to pass along an error correction that a sharp-eyed reader spotted. Ron Tebo of Calgary was the first to catch me on my comment of us having successfully travelled another 93 million miles around the sun. That, as it turns out, is our distance from the sun, the trip around is closer to 450 million miles, so I was off by a bit. In appreciation for his star-gazing eyes, I've sent Ron a little token of appreciation from *The Voice Magazine*.

As always, enjoy the read!




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## The Crib of Normal

Jason Sullivan



This morning the first thing that captured my senses was a baby crib shaped like a shark's mouth. A Quebecois TV announcer was discussing this odd family product. It occurred to me that, the night before, I'd been watching 'Pirates of the Caribbean' on the French channel. Not because I speak more than a lick of French, but because I was curious to see how many words I could pick up. This unorthodox beginning to my day led me to wonder about all the forms of normality we take for granted, or even grant moral superiority.

For instance, what if you woke up one morning to find that coffee and tea were illegal stimulants? If you were Mormon you'd be surprised that a scripture from your holy book had been made law; suddenly your normal had been enforced on everyone else (Doctrine and Covenants, 9). If you weren't Mormon you'd probably be flabbergasted to find out that being busted for drinking hot beverages now warranted a stiff fine or even a mandatory stay in a rehabilitation clinic. Those who don't consume coffee or tea might instead be mortified to wake up to discover that their ice cream or potato chip privileges had been suspended. You get the idea. What if every normal behaviour you did was challenged? Furthermore, what if we were to rigorously challenge social preconceptions in our own lives?

Normality is context-dependent. I recall how when a friend of mine acquired a dog we soon realized that playing backyard bocce now involved additional, er, obstacles aside from shrubbery and rose bushes. Being tentative about haphazardly grabbing one's ball off of the ground became the new normal. In life, external factors dictate the social expectations we have. Or, as Mannville, Alberta native, Erving Goffman, put it, social circumstances dictate our definition of the situation (Goffman, 1956). Much of being ourselves and acting naturally depends upon reference scales which take their cues from details in the world around us. Our responses to reality come to feel instinctual. Yet new versions of normality are cropping up all the time.

We account for our behaviour in terms of individual motives, or social pressure, or a combination of the two. This attribution process tends also to be dictated by our surroundings; if a person goes against the grain, people feel unsettled or even upset. It's like how if you clasp your hands together with fingers interlocked in whatever way feels natural and then clasp them together in the opposite way, with the fingers slotted into what feels like the 'wrong' position, a disturbing feeling ensues. However, unlike our genetically determined preference for one or another handclasp position, socialization and our self-image determines what feels proper in assorted situations. What feels right depends on what we and those around us believe in and how we act; social reality is remarkably labile.

Our behavioural choices are largely unconscious; often we act naturally almost without a second thought. When good things happen to us, at our graduation, for instance, we try to spread credit to others such that we don't seem narcissistic. When the BC Lions announced their new head coach, highly-touted Jeff Tedford, who turned around the Cal-Berkeley football program in such dramatic fashion that fans wore tie-dyed shirts emblazoned with the words 'Tedford is God' around campus, he, at the press conference, thanked many others for his hiring but did not pat himself on the back (Ulrich, 2014). No matter how much of a pedestal (or podium) we are placed

on, we instinctually know better than to herald our arrival at the top. Only in the most tyrannical regimes does a leader fully embrace the cult of personality which unfolds around him or her.

Yet, in some circumstances, where positive life changes occur, people utilize the opposite sort of accounting practices. We make the event much more personal, much more about ourselves, and we believe that our individualized definition of the situation holds true. Wedding vows, for instance, are often written as though two isolated hearts, adrift and alone in the universe, came together by some quantum-mechanical intervention. A sidelong glance on a trail near a beach, a dropped package of penne in the aisles of a store, and voila, two souls found each other and, by divine right, were united into one. In our culture, marriage is a relatively individualized institution; it embodies the essence of our belief in free will and freedom of choice. Yet people who meet and fall in love do so while remaining enmeshed within their pre-existing social circumstances (kids, co-workers, friend networks), and, once married, continue to inhabit a variety of social roles. Marriage does not occur in a vacuum.

I should add, incidentally, that the folks I know who had arranged marriages have the same 50% divorce rate as those (including me) who met through average North American cultural channels ie. as 'strangers'. In terms of online dating, people are matched up in terms of traits and beliefs, tastes and goals. Very little is left to chance after you've spent a half hour filling out personality questionnaires. In many ways relationships are more arranged now than in the proverbial days of Romeo and Juliet or rural 'shotgun weddings'.

The truth is, our individual traits and expectations of relationships are only part of the equation. There is no Mr. Right or Mrs. Perfect without their attendant social facts and, in many cases, their human (not to mention animal) attendants. We are not so far removed from the medieval Cinderella ball where each courtesan has her retinue of supporters and even clingers-on. A recent comedy movie called *Ted* made this hilariously clear: a 30-something man struggled with commitments to his beautiful girlfriend because he couldn't give up attachment to his beloved teddy bear. Of course, the teddy bear was really just the stereotypical 'best buddy' which women as well as men often have to distance themselves from—or even elide from their lives if they are to achieve marital bliss. He needed to challenge what had been normal for him since childhood.

It is not by coincidence that serenity and silence evoke one another in our minds; the more social clamour we feel in our life, the less we are certain that our individual choices are really our own. For this reason we must question what normal really means to us and to what extent our own personal, private, morality is being framed by our true desires or to what extent we are being framed by social facts beyond our control.

As distance education students, this process of criticism and self-criticism is particularly vital: who hasn't been asked 'what are you gonna do with your education?' And who doesn't know a cohort or comrade who ended up majoring in something that was far down on their list of desired topics? In order to fulfil ourselves we have to be able to drown out the roar of the rushing social ocean, be it the media giving dire forecasts for graduates with Arts degrees, or our friends counselling us that we need to have our career (code word for future income) in mind, long enough to ask if what seems normal and expected of us is really what we desire. In the end, even the simplest things, like the language on the TV or the way our hands clasp into those of a lover, can, with a slight change, yield drastically-different results. We might even feel like buying a shark-crib for our niece.

#### Sources

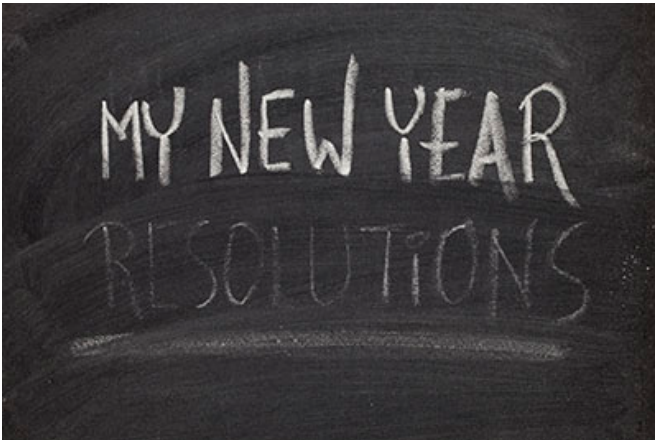
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## Dusting off a Fresh New Year

Barabara Lehtiniemi



Although I'm not a big fan of New Year's Resolutions (see last January's article, [\*Resolving to Abolish New Year's Resolutions\*](#)), a fresh new year does provide an ideal occasion for reflection.

The start of a year offers an opportunity to examine where you've been, where you are now, and where you're going. The new year is also a convenient time to measure your growth and take a hard look at the things you do and the way you do them. Are you still doing the same things in the same way as a year ago? If you're feeling stagnant, perhaps it's time for a refresh.

It's often the small incremental adjustments that have staying power and lasting effect. Here are some dusty corners of life worth examining this new year:

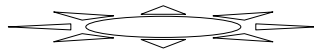
- **Review the routine.** Having routines makes things easier. Because you've worked out the steps you need to, say, get ready for work in the morning, you don't waste energy thinking and planning each action. But routines can turn into ruts that cause us to mindlessly repeat actions that no longer make sense. Take some time to examine your routine actions to see if it still makes sense to do a sequence of tasks in a specific way and order. Each January 1, I spend a quiet afternoon writing important dates—birthdays and such—on the new year's calendar. Although this task is pleasant, not to mention compatible with a hangover, it finally occurred to me that if I transfer the dates to an electronic calendar, I need not do this task ever again.
- **De-clutter.** If the only time you look at your knick-knacks is when you dust, it may be time to re-think the curio shelf. Museums often rotate their collection to keep the displays fresh and interesting. You can do this at home too, by rearranging your objets d'art or packing some away for a time. I have a pair of well-used Dutch wooden shoes, which a relative brought to Canada as a souvenir after WWII. In the decades they've been displayed in my living room, not one visitor has commented on them, and I only notice them myself when I clean around them. It's time to move them, pack them up, or give them away.
- **Rearrange.** Is your furniture in the same configuration in which you quickly arranged it when you moved 15 years ago? Perhaps you've gotten used to the arrangement, even though it isn't ideal. It's time to look at the layout and see if you can come up with a more pleasing and efficient array. I put a much-needed table in an available space near my desk a year ago, and I manage to bruise my leg against it regularly. Finally, today, I spent two minutes contemplating the room's overall arrangement, then five minutes swapping the table's location with a low-profile bookshelf. A simple solution that was only waiting for me to notice it.
- **Re-imagine the menu.** Can your family tell the day of the week by what you serve for supper? Maybe it's time to expand your recipe repertoire. In her bestselling book, *Julie & Julia*, Julie Powell set out to make every recipe in Julia Child's *Mastering the Art of French Cooking* in the space of one year. You need not go that far, but consider trying a new recipe once a week (or once in a while.) I've clipped a number of recipes out of magazines over the past year and have made exactly none. It only took a few minutes of sifting through them to find one I can make this week with ingredients already on hand.



- **Detour.** Do you take the same route to/from work or school? Maybe it's the optimal route or maybe there's a better one waiting to be discovered. Try varying your route and you'll see your community through fresh eyes and maybe make a discovery or two. Taking a new route occasionally also prevents driver zone-out, which happens when you know a much-traveled route so well you don't have to think about it.

Making small adjustments may not feel life-changing, but can spark your creative spirit. By using the new year to get a fresh perspective on the things you do and see every day you may generate the drive you need to concentrate on the big picture.

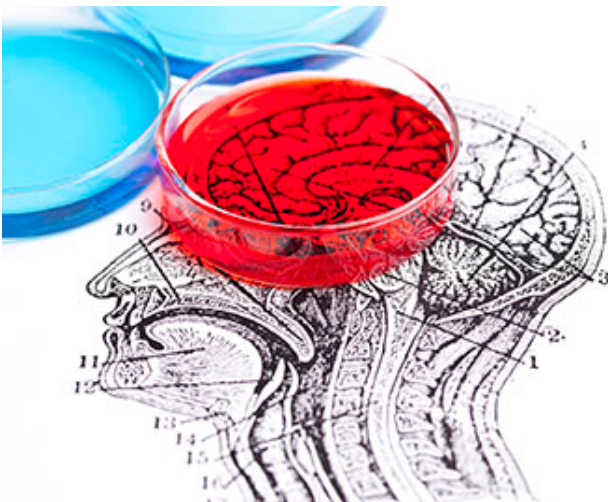
*Barbara Lehtiniemi is a writer, photographer, and AU student. She lives on a windswept rural road in Eastern Ontario*



## Primal Numbers

### Forty Winks

**S.D. Livingston**



Welcome to the healthiest time of the year. The month when we make resolutions to eat all our vegetables, get some exercise, and get plenty of sleep. There's no doubt that exercise and vegetables are good for us, but the science on sleep isn't quite that clear. Are eight solid hours really the best thing to aim for, or can we learn a little something from our restless ancestors?

Sleep has long been an enigma. Shakespeare called it both "nature's soft nurse" and "death's counterfeit," and even though our minds and bodies need it, a restful night can be frustratingly elusive. Insomnia is a common problem, with the US-based

Sleep Foundation [reporting](#) that "roughly 30 percent of the general population complains of sleep disruption."

It probably doesn't help that a standard eight hours of uninterrupted snoozing has long been held up as the ideal. As *Science Alert* [reports](#), research shows that the average person needs "seven to nine hours a night in order to function properly and stay healthy." Without it, serious health effects can include "poor cardiovascular health, obesity and impaired performance."

In an age where personal data tracking (everything from ounces of water to number of steps) is promoted as the way to a healthy, successful life, waking up in the night can seem like a failure of sorts, as though missing the recommended sleep goal is akin to skipping daily exercise or eating pie instead of vegetables. That anxiety and worry can make it even harder to fall asleep, which can add to the harm caused by sleep deprivation.

But should we really be aiming for eight hours of uninterrupted sleep, or simply an overall total of around eight hours each day? History, and recent studies, reveal that two short sleeps each night might be our body's norm.

As this [BBC article](#) notes, historian Roger Ekirch spent 16 years researching human sleep patterns. For centuries, a normal night's sleep in Western nations consisted of two distinct segments. The first "began about two hours after dusk, followed by waking period of one or two hours and then a second sleep."

Ekirch found hundreds of references to this kind of sleep pattern, from court documents to private letters. It was so common, in fact, that Charles Dickens and Miguel Cervantes are among the writers who casually mention it in their novels (*Barnaby Rudge* and *Don Quixote*, respectively).

That doesn't mean people never woke up tired in the 17th or 18th century. Especially not the lower classes, who typically had poor diets and did a lot of hard physical labour. But it's worth considering that, in the days before artificial lighting kept us up and about long after sunset, two separate sleeps seemed to be the natural pattern humans were drawn to.

In contrast, poor sleep, lack of sleep, and a general sense of tiredness are common complaints in our modern life full of labour-saving machines, comfortable beds, and central heating.

Plenty of factors could be to blame, including steady diets of fast food, lack of exercise, and the constant bombardment of signals (from traffic lights to Twitter feeds) our brains try to process. But as the BBC article notes, Ekirch's research points to two big issues in the modern malaise of tiredness: "the human body's natural preference for segmented sleep as well as the ubiquity of artificial light."

So when it comes to the science of a good night's sleep, it might be time to put that notion of a solid eight hours to bed.

*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.*

## Student Sizzle AU's Hot Social Media Topics

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

### AUSU Student Forums

In the *Business and Administration* forum, user "clabossiere" is taking ADMN 233 and seeks a study buddy for this course and beyond. User "ivarachhia" requests help on LBST 200 in the *State and Legal Studies* forum. And in the *Ask AUSU* forum, "mj45" queries AUSU on the expenditure for a staff succession plan that was voted on in the September 10, 2014 council meeting.

Other topics include a potential Toronto meetup and courses ENGL 353 and WGST 303.

### AthaU Facebook Group

Sean seeks feedback from other mature students on the way forward after stalling in his studies. Jessica asks for clarification on the transfer credit process. Singh requests feedback from students who have completed the BGS program. Janine seeks advice on taking PSYC 289 and PSYC 290 together. Other postings include Vikings, online applications for graduation, and courses BIOL 204, ECOM 320, ENGL 353, and LBST 200.

### Twitter

@AthabascaU tweets news of AU's new Business of Hockey MBA. Applications open February 1. Details [here](#).



## The Mindful Bard Congress

Wanda Waterman



A Leggy Blonde, a Cartoon Dreamworld,  
and a Pharmaceutical Corporation . . .  
What Could Possibly Go Wrong?

**Film:** *The Congress*

**Director:** Ari Folman

Adapted from the novel *The Futurological Congress*, by Stanislaw Lem

"For those who stubbornly seek freedom, there can be no more urgent task than to come to understand the mechanisms and practices of indoctrination. These are easy to perceive in the totalitarian societies, much

less so in the system of 'brainwashing under freedom' to which we are subjected and which all too often we serve as willing or unwitting instruments."

-Noam Chomsky

Ari Folman, an Israeli film director, screenwriter, and film score composer, took some pretty broad liberties with the novel *The Futurological Congress*: "I was looking for a new, more current dimension to the allegory of the communist era in the book," he says in a recent [interview](#). In the novel the enemy was a communist dictatorship, but in the film the satanic entity is the entertainment business.

The implied goal of technology is to eliminate pain, work, ugliness, and inconvenience, and so in this sci-fi story we find studios digitally sampling actors to create digital doubles that, unlike real actors, are never late, disagreeable, or demanding, and that never grow old.

In the process of looking for a room in which to construct the digitizer for the film, Folman was amazed to discover that the fictitious technology described in the screenplay—a huge room that records actors' physical forms as well as every facial expression and gesture in their repertoire, using all that data to create a digital actor—actually exists now.

Robin Wright, who plays herself, has not had a happy life as an actress, and now she's being offered a way out. But she refuses. Why? Because the studio's demand to use her digital double to play whatever role it chooses somehow smacks of totalitarianism.

Her agent argues: "You were *always* their puppet!" In other words, she has already been fetishized and depersonalized, at great personal expense; so why not cut all the aggravation of actual acting and just take the money and run?

But she doesn't want to feel as if the studio owns her identity. Again her agent offers some moral persuasion:

"If you failed to do what they asked you to do, you would cease to exist, for Christ's sake!" he bellows, implying that her only reality is as a character on a screen. Apparently she's already unreal.

Robin isn't buying it. Somehow she feels invested in her identity, as if the studio's iron control of her sample would signify a kind of unlawful control of her true self. In the story the film executives keep repeating that Robin makes bad choices in everything and that this pisses everybody off, but she demands the right to retain her freedom of choice even if no one else likes it.

In order to convince Robin of how advanced this technology really is, they show her a clip from a scene that uses a digital actress. It's quite fitting that in the scene a woman can just barely cope with the thought of her man cheating, but the fact that he voted twice for each of the two Bushes is utterly unbearable to her. Point being: in the entertainment world's version of events, ideology trumps love (Slavoj Zizek, I hope you're watching).

In spite of her reservations, Robin is eventually compelled to sign the contract because her son, Aaron, suffers from Usher syndrome, a genetic condition that's slowly destroying his hearing and eyesight. He needs her, and she's aging out of the star maker machinery fast, and so getting fewer offers of work. She needs money to free her to care for her son.

After years of caring for Aaron while her sampled self stars in countless movies, Robin is a special guest at "The Congress" and to appear at the place the studio has created and where the congress is meeting, she must alter her consciousness with a specially developed drug that subjugates collective consciousness, allowing all participants to enter the animated city of Abrahama, where they can be and do whatever they want as cartoon versions of themselves.

Abrahama City simulates an intense, pain-free experience, and it looks like it was designed by R. Crumb and Georgia O'Keefe, the images ranging from divine to demonic. Robin is encouraged to believe that it's she who controls her reality here: "Everything is in our mind. If you see the dark then you chose the dark," a robot explains when her lights go out.

The propaganda violently shoved down the throats of the avatars in the animated city is that they can now consume drugs that free them from all pain and that allow them total freedom of choice. The engineers of the brave new world are practically crowing that they've replaced God.

Robin is eventually punished for speaking the truth in an anti-truth world, and is frozen for twenty years. Tellingly, the guy who freezes her is the same guy that had put her in the sampling dome to begin with.

The animated fictive reality is lovely, posh, devoid of suffering, and utterly dreadful, desolate, and dead inside, as Robin learns in the harshest possible way.

The film loses points for segments of dialogue that are just a little too lame to believe, but gains them back for its careful attention to a subtext that, from the beginning, unravels and instills a profound message. For example, when Robin's son Aaron talks about the euphoria of flying his kites under descending airplanes, his speech sounds terribly contrived, but his words point to the intensity of real experience, which can never be simulated, and suggest a deep desire for a love affair between art and technology, something Francesco Casetti would refer to as a manifestation of the drive within film itself to negotiate the union of art, nature, and technology.

As a female character, Robin is rivaled only by Ingmar Bergman's film women in the sense of being fully human, with a depth of sensibility and moral character that make her physical beauty seem a trifle. Her relationship

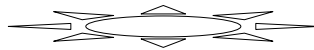


with the character Dylan is so poignantly, beautifully real; even though they entered their relationship as animated avatars, their love is devoid of artifice—open, honest, vulnerable, and blessed.

*The Congress* manifests nine 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 harmoniously unites art with social action, saving me from both seclusion in an ivory tower and slavery to someone else's political agenda.
- It provides respite from a sick and cruel world, a respite enabling me to renew myself for a return to mindful artistic endeavor.
- It's about attainment of the true self.
- It inspires an awareness of the sanctity of creation.
- 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.*



## The Travelling Student Pulling the Cord

**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 eleven in the story of how Athabasca University has allowed me to create my own study abroad program. In part 10 we left the work camp in Longue Rive and drove down a remote logging road.*

The van stopped, we had arrived at our piece, or so I thought. (Each worker has an area referred to as a 'piece', this makes measuring how much land each person has cleared easier). Matt, myself, and a few other workers got out of the van. A few others stayed in the van as their piece was still a fair distance away. We grabbed our saws off the roof of the van and it drove away.

The boss came by in his truck and filled our canisters with gas. He instructed us to follow another worker to our piece. Little did I realize that our piece was still another half hour walk into the bush, a good portion of which was uphill. Now, to really understand the experience you have to understand that a brush saw is quite heavy. We were using the FS 560, the biggest brush cutter on the market. Essentially the FS 560 is a weed-whacker with a huge engine on one end and a big blade on the other.

As we started into the forest I burst up the hill with a spurt of energy, my arms flexing to bear the weight of the saw. It wasn't until five minutes in when my arms started to feel like they were about to fall off that I realized everyone else had their saws attached to their harnesses. Here I was using all my strength to carry this huge saw while everyone else was simply letting it hang off their harness which thus moving all the weight to their shoulders.

Once I readjusted and attached the saw to my harness things got a lot easier. Don't mistake a lot easier with easy, I was still breaking a sweat. While most of the crew walked on with ease, I wasn't the only one having trouble. An older gentleman, maybe in his late thirties or forties, was having a hard time as well. After getting to the top of a hill I took a breath of relief. There was a small hunting tent set up and Matt, who was a bit ahead of me by now, stopped to examine it. "They must do a lot of hunting up here" he said.

We would later find out that hunting was the main attraction of Longue Rive. Several hunting tents were scattered throughout the forest we worked in. On some days the hunters would be waiting in the woods for the cutters to leave so they could begin hunting. When we would leave on the way out I would imagine hunters watching us through the scopes of their rifles.

Not long after we arrived the worker who was instructed to show us to our piece gave us an explanation of its boundaries. He explained that we'd be sharing a piece for the first few days. Which worked out ok because Matt had some brush cutting experience—meaning he could help me to get started. We put on our safety gear and headed into our piece. Matt explained that it was important that we had to pay great attention to the geometry of where we cut. The trick was to make sure we never had to walk far distances over area we had already cleared and to do so in a fashion that left us some uncut area near our home base where we had left extra gas, tools, and our food. Essentially the pattern we would cut in was similar to how you'd cut the grass of a large lawn. You don't want to create bubbles of uncut grass surrounded by cut grass.

The big difference between brush cutting and cutting a lawn was that our piece was so big you couldn't see the end of it, it was thick, full of bushes and small trees, and it was very easy to get lost in. We had a game plan and were ready to get started. I heard a loud yell in the distance, the type of loud yell that Tarzan would make, and then seconds later I heard the sound of a brush cutter being fired up. All I could think was "Wow, this is really intense stuff." With that, we were off. I pulled the string and fired up my engine.

## DID YOU KNOW?

## 2014 TUITION, EDUCATION AND TEXTBOOK AMOUNTS CERTIFICATE



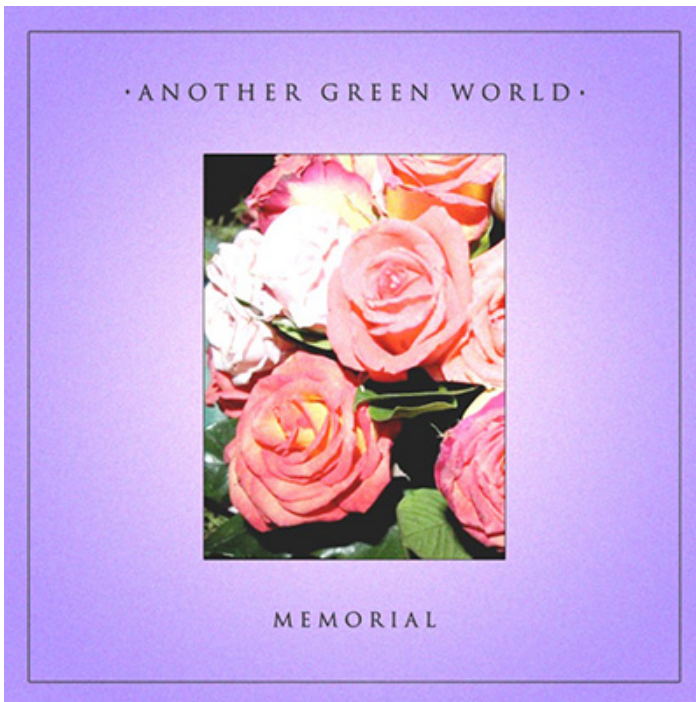
*Update from Athabasca University Financial Services...*

Athabasca University Financial Services is pleased to announce that the official 2014 Tuition, Education and Textbook Tax Credit Certificate (T2202A) forms will be available on-line by the end of February to all eligible students. The forms will not be mailed out and instead are on-line in printable format for all students to access. Please visit AU's web site at [www.athabascau.ca](http://www.athabascau.ca) for further details on obtaining your tuition and education and textbook tax credit information for your 2014 tax return. You can go to 'Questions? Ask AU' under Contact menu bar at the left side of AU web site and enter "What is a T2202A" in the search box.

## Music Review

### Another Green World

Samantha Stevens



**Artist:** Another Green World

**Album:** Memorial

With the hectic holiday season over it's important to take some time to relax and ease back into your normal schedule. I think there's no better way to relax and start a new year off right than to check out a new musician.

I was surprised by Another Green World. Not being a big fan of 80s music, which tended to go overboard on the synthesizer, I cringed at the thought of music that is primarily comprised of that. But I am delighted to say that I was wrong in my dread. Instead, I was treated to soft music that draws from the best of the 80s electronic and combines it with singing that seems to seep into the music from somewhere outside of it entirely. And at times the inclusion of modern guitar

and drums reminds the listener that this is a new take on an older form of music.

Created by Alec West in 2007, Another Green World is a solo act from Memphis, Tennessee. This is the artist's fifth album, and was released by 80s Ladies Records on October 21, 2014.

Influenced by Duran Duran and The Cure, Another Green World creates music that seeps into your soul and carries you away on dreamy melodies into a world where imagination is key. The titles of the songs provide some guidance for your imagination with names like "Disguise", "Kuraudo", and "Promise". I think naming the songs this way allows the listener to interpret the music as they wish, while having a starting point for the imagination suggested by the musician that created it.

The music on *Memorial* is considerably different from most electronic music of today. The 80s inspired music awakens feelings of nostalgia and memories of old favourite movies from that era. The music could easily be mistaken for the soundtrack of a teen movie from the 80s. Each song is full of emotion and meaning, and whether you are listening to the music attentively or passively playing the album in the background, you will feel yourself get carried away on the waves of music.

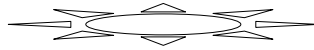
My favourite track on this album is "Kuraudo". Like the rest of the tracks on the album, the song is primarily dominated by the synthesizer, but this song is inspired by traditional Asian music. I really enjoyed how this track was so different from the remainder of the album, and the water sounds that can be heard softly in the background remind me of a small pond full of fish that I once saw in a grand garden. As well, this song is one of the few tracks on the album with no vocals, although I really do like the vocals in the other tracks.

And although you may not need reminding of the weather outside, the tracks "Snow" and "Blizzard" don't make you feel chilly, but instead the music seems to focus on the beauty that the winter season brings. "Snow" is upbeat and fun, reminding me of sliding down snow covered hills, skating, and snowball fights. The

synthesizer in "Blizzard" creates a sound that captures the sound of a sparkle. I never thought that being able to capture a visual phenomena in music would be possible, but Another Green World proved that it can be done.

So if you find yourself wanting to start the New Year off with some different music, be sure to check out Another Green World's *Memorial*.

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



## Writer's Toolbox

### In Brief, Part I

**Christina M. Frey**



Happy New Year! Let's kick off 2015 by starting out small. Very small, that is—we'll spend a few weeks sorting through the world of acronyms, initialisms, and other small but tricky abbreviations. This week we'll look at how to label them and when to use the long form. In later installments we'll get into issues like spacing, punctuation, and whether or not the possessive form takes an apostrophe.

#### By Any Other Name

What do NASA, CEO, a.m., JPEG, and Dr. have in common? Better yet, what *don't* they have in common? The word "acronym" may come to mind, but only a few of those examples are true acronyms. In fact, in the world of abbreviations, there are three loose categories: acronyms, initialisms, and contractions.

Acronyms are words made from the initial letters of the phrase they're abbreviating, *and which are read as a word rather than as individual letters*. Examples are "NASA" and "laser" (yes, that's an abbreviation, though we don't think of "light amplification by stimulated emission of radiation" when we see it!).

Initialisms are words made from the initial letters of the phrase they're abbreviating, *and which are read as individual component letters*. Examples are "CEO" and "a.m."

Contractions are words formed from the first and last letters of the word they're abbreviating. Examples are "Dr." or "Mt" (for "Mount," as in a mountain).

In addition to these categories, there are also general abbreviations, or shortened forms of words or phrases—for example, "Gov. Gen." for "Governor General."

#### Not So Simple

Note that I referred to these categories as "loose." Some abbreviations seem to straddle two categories—like "JPEG," which is read as both a word and as its component letters. Because the definitions are not strict, and because the abbreviation's category usually doesn't matter except in some limited punctuation-related situations (we'll tackle those another day), it's best to call all these shortened forms "abbreviations" and save the category names for trivia night.



## Long vs. Short

No one wants to read a page of alphabet soup, but sometimes using abbreviations is necessary. Whether you should write out the first instance of the abbreviation is a question of context. Is the abbreviation so common that there's no risk of confusion? Words like "GPS" or "AIDS" or "MP" don't need explanation; others, like the abbreviations for Canadian government offices, might. Consult a dictionary, and if there's any doubt that your readers might not understand, play it safe and use the long form first.

If you do write out the first instance of the abbreviation, include the abbreviation in parentheses immediately after. Then use the abbreviation throughout the rest of the writing:

*Example A: Sarah is interviewing with the Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO). Because she had an internship with the DFO last summer, she's hoping her experience will get her the job.*

In next week's issue we'll look at punctuation questions that crop up (and how Canadian usage may differ from other usage you may have seen in books and magazines). Later we'll move on to more specialized questions, like how to abbreviate government entities and academic degrees.

*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](#).*



## The Career Path

## Marie Well



I've embarked on the journey to learn as much as I possibly can about making income online. After reading the book titled *Get Rich Click* by Marc Ostrofsky, I discovered a number of potential money-making outlets for students. I visited the physical sites of these resources and determined how invaluable they might be for earning income on the side. Additionally, I love Amazon's opportunities for self-publishers, whether of ebooks, physical books, music, or video. Seriously, you can record your voice on a USB microphone and upload it on Amazon for sale as an MP3 in a matter of minutes (pending approvals, I believe). If you are a budding videographer, you can upload your video works, price it, and start selling shortly thereafter.

So, here are some of the best of the tidbits I've encountered for students and budding authors for making money on the Internet via writing skills:

### justanswer.com

You are likely a student, and you might even be an expert in some area. Why not try your hand at answering people's questions within seven minutes from the justanswer.com site? As a user, I selected the expertise area of homework help with writing, typed in a simple question of "do you actually write the papers" into the field, and went through some additional screens, one of which listed the fee for the service, which ranged from \$47 to \$96, depending on the urgency and the detail required.

Why not you become an expert on justanswer.com? The expertise areas they are seeking include, but are not limited to, legal and tax help, cars and vehicle advice, computer advice, homework advice, writing advice, Powerpoint and Presentations advice, math homework help, relationship coaching, health and medical, and etiquette coaching.

**about.com**

If you want to make in the \$50 range (or higher, though no-one seems to know for sure what their range of pay contains), then consider writing for about.com magazine.

About.com is looking for writers in topics such as computer science, anthropology, Arabic language, art history, engineering, medical school, Hindi language, and other areas. They also look for entertainment writers, such as writers on comic books, dating and relationship advice, oil and gas articles, travel commentaries, and hobbies such as photography or drawing and sketching, to name a few.

**Createspace**

On Amazon Createspace, you can produce print books, audio downloads, and digital downloads that Amazon places on its site, selling your products at a profit to you. There are no outstanding fees, other than assistance with helping format the products, such as the print books. You can upload a word document or a PDF file, and they have a converted to make it work on the fly. Yet, it likely won't look as appealing as it could have if you paid \$199 out of pocket to purchase a simple interior design. You upload your edited book, and the Amazon staff will format your book for the interior design you chose within eight days. It is not a good fit for incorporating images, and you will instead want to go with something like Blurb for photo ready projects (see below for more on that).

As an example, if you make a 6 inch by 9 inch black and white book with 250 pages, and you list the book at \$20 (which is reasonable for a print book), you would earn an \$8.15 USD commission if you upload it to Amazon.com. If you register for a Createspace account, you can go into its royalty calculator to see how much you can earn per book.

There is a cover generator, too, where you can use an image and have it placed on the cover page along with your title and author name, etcetera. I would recommend you either use the free cover generator or make your own cover, although making your own cover gets complex because the different number of pages of your book change the length dimensions of your book slightly. You will want to create the cover after you have finalized all of your book editing. If you make the cover yourself, you will want to go to the article titled Artwork & Templates within the Createspace portal to set your book dimensions and get a PDF or .png file that is to be used as the guide for your cover page in any program you use. It is then \$99 to get assistance from Amazon with help to ensure your PDF is in the right format. A cover design by Amazon can cost \$399 for a custom cover with a single image to \$599 for an expert cover. I'd highly recommend you do it yourself.

Once your document is ready, Amazon can optionally convert it to a Kindle format for you for \$79.99.

Good Createspace sites include <https://www.createspace.com/Products/Book/InteriorPDF.jsp> for Microsoft Word interior templates and <https://www.createspace.com/Help/Book/Artwork.do> for cover design templates that you can import into your favourite art program, such as Photoshop or Illustrator.

**Blurb.com**

If you are interested in making an illustrated book, particularly with photographs, or a magazine of sorts, then the direction you want to go to is at blurb.com. Blurb is an ambiguous service at the outset. It seems to be print on demand service that can be associated with booksellers like Amazon, but also offers sales by quantity, including 1-9 books for US \$12.99 per book at 20 pages per book. At 100 pages per book, the price goes up to what seems to be an exorbitant and uncompetitive level.

Yet, Blurb has some amazing templates for Adobe users in addition to services for those with an existing PDF or Microsoft document in the proper format. For those students who wish to hone their Adobe skills, the free lynda.com service available through the Students' Union offers extensive instruction on how to work in Adobe. That's how I learned the program, and once you have mastered the basics, free, beautiful templates on Blurb are available at <http://www.blurb.com/templates>. There are even templates for cookbooks, for students who

wish to take their home culinary expertise to the next level. Magazine templates, portrait style templates, portfolio templates, and landscape templates are all made available at your fingertips.

### Amazon Kindle

Amazon Kindle is the easiest medium to publish in from the starting point of a Word document. It helps to know some HTML, although it is not vital to the process. A free ebook at Amazon called [Building Your Book For Kindle](#) will help guide you through the simple steps of setting up your word document and preparing your zip file for upload. It takes all of an hour to an hour and a half to read, and you are ready to go. To sign up for the Kindle account as an author, go to <https://kdp.amazon.com/signin>.

I noticed that a number of authors write short, 30 page ebooks on a variety of topics of interest, including careers, how to play a musical instrument, and leadership (sometimes all by the same author). If you spend 30 days writing a page a day on a topic that you love and wish to share, you too can make your first draft of a book. But be sure to give it at least four polish rewrites and hire an editor.

So, if all those essays have hiked your desire to write for extra income, above are some possible venues to realize greater earning potential for the New Year.

### Click of the Wrist

### Resolutions

If you're like thousands of others who have made fitness part of their New Year's resolutions, you probably know that having a plan is key to success. But starting small and having some fun are also necessary if you're going to stick with it! Click through these links for a few creative ways to make 2015 the year you actually do get in shape:

#### Bend It Like . . . Batman?

Batman? Star Lord? Katniss Everdeen? Or Super Mario? If you've got a favourite film, video game, or comic book character, see if they've inspired one of these trainer-designed workout programs. Feeling lazy? There's even a movie night workout, complete with leg lifts done from the comfort of your own sofa.

#### Make A Bet

Accountability boosts your chances of success. So does putting money on the line. GymPact does both. It's a social app that allows you to make "pacts" with other users, describing what you'll do in terms of working out or eating healthier—and what you'll pay if you *don't* meet your goal for the week. If you do succeed, you can collect money from users who didn't reach their own goals. Sounds like a powerful motivator!

#### Just Take Five

Maybe you don't have time for a large-scale workout, but even just five minutes—done consistently—is better than no exercise at all! These five-minute workouts from *Fitness* magazine can get you started. If you have an iPhone, be sure to check out the [Hot5 app](#), which includes five-minute workouts and a whole lot more (unfortunately, there's no Android app available at this time).



## Five Tips for your New Year's Resolutions

Philip Kirkbride



According to *Forbes Magazine*, only 8% of people achieve their New Year's resolutions. The fact that you're a student at Athabasca means you're probably interested in self-improvement and making progress in your life. Your New Year's Resolution might even involve your classes at Athabasca; I know mine does.

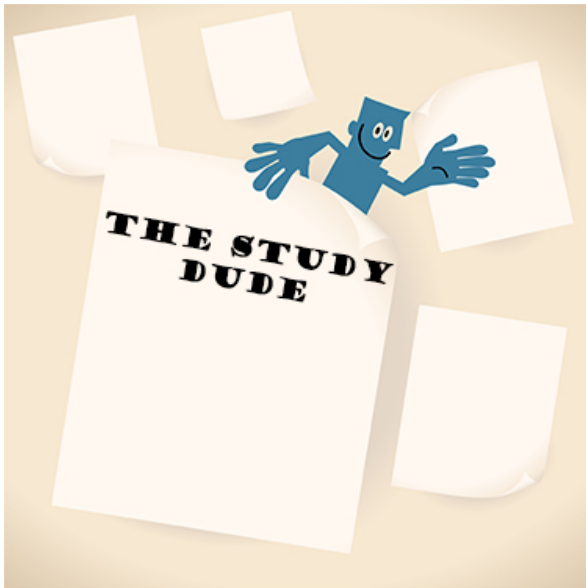
So I've done some research to come up with five tips which can help us achieve our goals in 2015.

- 1. Don't be over optimistic:** Many people are doomed from the start when it comes to resolutions because their over-optimism causes them to set lofty goals they're unable to achieve. Being discouraged when they realize they won't achieve it they stop trying altogether. Be realistic when setting a goal, and remember that it's better to set a goal you can go above and beyond than one you will fall short of achieving.
- 2. Make it simple:** It's hard enough to achieve a single New Year's resolution, let alone a long bucket list of goals. Make your goal simple, easy to define, and easy to remember.
- 3. Share your goal:** This one can be scary because it means you're being held accountable. Share your New Year's Resolution with friends, family, and your community at large. Having other people know about your goal puts the pressure on to follow through. If everyone at work knows you're quitting smoking it makes it that much harder to go out for a smoke break on lunch (as if standing in the snow wasn't hard enough).
- 4. Winging it:** Another reason many resolutions fail is the lack of a plan. For example you might have a goal of losing 10 pounds in 2015. If you haven't given any thought about how you're going to put that plan into action you're winging it. Before you decide on a goal, sit down and make a plan. This relates back to the first tip, in that making a plan will help you to better decide if you're being over-optimistic.
- 5. Systems are always better than goals:** This also relates to the first tip. Often goals set us back by causing us to quit. Many successful people focusing on having systems instead of goals. With a system, the reward is sticking to the system each and every day rather than achieving an arbitrary goal. For example, if you're a coach your goal is to win the game, but your system is to have your team practise every day. Let's face it, we can't win every game. Sometimes you just have to be happy knowing you did your best. I originally read about this concept from Scott Adams, the creator of Dilbert, so if you're interested you can read more [here](#).

All in all, I think Athabasca students are well equipped to achieve their New Year's Resolutions. As distance education students, we know how to plan on our own schedule and meet our goals without too much outside influence. So in the spirit of this, I'm going to share my goals for 2015 with you. They include finishing the majority of my degree and continuing to write for The Voice on a regular basis.

If you have a goal or comment you want to share you can contact the Editor of the Voice Magazine at [voice@voicemagazine.org](mailto:voice@voicemagazine.org)





### Study Tips from a Semi-Anonymous Friend

*There is nothing more that The Study Dude wants for you than to get accepted into Athabasca's graduate studies program and write your dissertation, opening up conference placements, authorship of several books, and public speaking engagements--with a multi-million dollar profile to boot and the credibility of a PhD behind your name. It's happening for a number of people. Why not you?*

*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.*

The third part of the critical thinking Study Dude series is being interrupted for a two part series on a book dealing with dissertations: *The Dissertation Journey* by Carol M. Roberts.

#### **Dissertation Support Groups (or the SU Study Buddy Program) (p. 64)**

When the Study Dude was in graduate studies, the students all convened to hang out at the bar. I was hoping to have a group that engaged in productive activities such as intramurals or the hosting and publication of a graduate students' journal. I don't drink alcohol, and I'm not the gossip dude, so the bar wasn't an option for me.

Yet, having a support network of likeminded, friendly people can be very beneficial to anyone seeking consultation on their topics, ideas, and works in progress. The Student's Union at Athabasca has a Study Buddy program for undergraduates wishing to seek students in similar courses. This has potential for opening up networks of disciplined partnerships, all geared toward making contributions to other people's projects, within the confines of the rules and regulations of the university, that is. The Study Buddy program could also lead to connections for engaging in productive extracurricular activities, potentially.

Roberts (2010) proposes a system for engaging in dissertation or study groups that could be effective for even online students:

- The group should consist of at least five students. If you have less than five people, don't go ahead with the meeting.
- The meetings should occur at least once a month.
- The meetings should last at least an hour and a half where the group discusses two members research at a time, taking 45 minutes per member.
- An abstract of the research should be submitted at least three days prior to the meeting.
- The focus should be only on constructive criticism—and no sidetrack gossip.
- Record the meeting (using Skype recording software for online meetings is a good way to go).
- Let the final fifteen minutes of the meeting be devoted to each member conveying their progress report.
- Ensure that each member signs a confidentiality agreement to keep things professional.

- If you miss the scheduled meeting, you will be obligated to do something predetermined, like buy a lottery ticket for each member of the group.
- Online groups can be scheduled where the meetings occur through Skype or a free teleconference service, with all calls recorded using appropriate software.

(Roberts, 2010)

The Study Dude has two recommendations. For recording meetings through Skype there is Pamela for PC Skype, and for teleconferencing there is FreeConferenceCall that enables you to record calls, although with poor quality sound. Another recommendation, which is much more costly, is to buy the Olympus WS-822 GMT Voice Recorder and buy an Olympus TP-8 Telephone Pick-up Microphone that has an ear bud that records the conversation. This can cost roughly \$150 as a kit, and is available at amazon.ca.

### **Picking a Topic (p. 48)**

The Study Dude has discovered that Athabasca University has a potentially more supportive professorial-to-student dynamic than that encountered at a physical university. When I approached a professor at Athabasca on a potential thesis topic (given the thought that I might venture into another graduate program), the professor was forthcoming with ample support, many references, and lots of clever ideas. As professors can be an amazing resource for topic ideas, this initial engagement proved indelibly rewarding. Moreover, choosing a thesis topic can have cross-over with choosing an undergraduate topic for a paper—a variety of resources can aid the journey to picking a workable topic that you are passionate about.

Here are some of the guidelines by Roberts (2010) for choosing a thesis topic:

- Focus on what you are passionate about because the more passionate you are, the more likely you will give the topic the attention it deserves.
- Ask professors and fellow students for their views and opinions on good topics.
- Glean professional journals (and their bibliographies) for any topics that might sit well with your personal and professional interests.
- Make friends of your librarians and have them help you search the databases for material that fits with a variety of your interests.
- Glean dissertations on your favourite topics to see what ideas there are and what recommendations for further research the graduate student may have documented.
- Attend oral defences.
- Go to conferences in your field, if money is not an issue.
- Email a prime researcher on your topic area for advice and guidance.
- See if your employer has a topic they want researched, but ensure that it is something that won't put you to sleep.
- Look at references in your field by searching the words "handbook," "yearbook", "review" and your field of interest (education, mathematics, etc).

(Roberts, 2010)

I think it was in Shakti Gawain's book Creative Visualizations that advice was given to write down 100 things you loved doing as a child, young adult, and adult and then another list of 100 things you would love to try to do, however far-fetched. Making such lists help you to gauge what it is that you are truly passionate about, and the 100 item minimum taps your brain so that you end up writing things that may surprise you in the long run.

As for me, the Study Dude, I realized that the radio show I made with my cousin as a child was one of the highlights of my life for a reason: I am passionate about making media/multimedia projects.

### **What Exactly is Plagiarizing (p. 40)**

The Study Dude learned in Roberts's book (2010) that paraphrasing was more optimal than citing with quotations. When staring down a research paper I had written, I had many direct citations with quotations as opposed to paraphrased material. Ideally, I would have rewritten the material so that there were only a sprinkling of direct quotations relative to paraphrased materials.

I also had a professor in undergraduate studies (who I adored and who is no longer with us, God rest her soul) who would call students' names for a private meaning at the end of the class, causing everyone to cringe. We all came to recognize those name-calling bouts as her identifying people involved in plagiarism. The fate of those particular students would be unbeknownst to us.

Yet, the common mistake of doctoral students (and undergraduates) is paraphrasing too closely. It is referred to by Roberts (2010) as "inadvertent plagiarism" (p. 40). This is a mistake that is made by most every graduate student, yet what delineates it is rarely articulated.

Roberts (2010) talks about the three forms of plagiarism (although she doesn't give much advice on how to actively avoid the third form, inadvertent plagiarism):

- Plagiarism is "using others' words or ideas without giving them proper credit" (p. 40).
- Plagiarism is "using others' exact words without quotation marks or indentation" (p. 40).
- And the most unsuspected, "closely paraphrasing others' words (even if citing the source" (p. 40).
- The inadvertent plagiarism, the third one above, can take the form of changing the word order, adding in a few synonyms, or just simply changing one or two words only.

(Roberts, 2010)

One way that Roberts (2010) suggests to gauge whether you are plagiarising is by looking at your paraphrased words, and if changing synonyms would give you roughly the same sentence in the same order, then it is likely inadvertent plagiarism.

Ideas can also be plagiarised, so if you take someone else's idea, it is essential to attribute the author(s) as the source.

Whew! I think everyone, including professors and graduate students, sweat bullets after reading that interpretation. Yet, it is good to know what constitutes even the mildest form of plagiarism so that you can ensure your documents are of the highest academic calibre, as the Study Dude would attest they are (given that you are the saint the Study Dude believes you to be).

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*

Roberts, Carol M. (2010). *The Dissertation Journey*. Thousand Oaks: CA. Corwin.



*Dear  
Barb*

*Barbara Godin*

## Dealing with the (New) Years

*Dear Barb,*

*I really enjoy Dear Barb's columns and her advice. I have experienced similar situations and found this column helpful. I have a question for her. My husband and I have been together for 3 years. We have had our ups and downs in this short time but one of the things we struggle with is to find something in common like activities or interests. We are very different people with very different backgrounds. What can we do to help us find some common interests as we have another 50 years of marriage and need to find something we both enjoy? Thanks. Bella*

Hi Bella:

Having differences does not have to be a problem, but you do need to have common interests to keep you connected. What brought you together? You must have had some common interests initially. Embrace your differences, while establishing new activities that you can do together. For example, if you enjoy different kinds of movies, compromise, take turns choosing movies that you each like. You will be doing something together, plus expanding your horizons. As I suggested in a previous column, search out activities that you may like, such as hiking/walking, most cities have hiking clubs you could join. Start up a bowling night with friends. Take dance lessons. Dancing is great exercise, plus a lot of fun. If you like playing cards, join a card group, or start a euchre night with family or friends. Take a class together. Check out your library, they offer a lot of activities, such as

author readings, book clubs, movie nights, workshops, lectures and most are free. The possibilities are endless. Most importantly, enjoy your time together.

*Dear Barb:*

*OMG! Went to a New Year's Eve party and got so drunk that I did something I shouldn't have! I am so embarrassed. My friend invited me to a party at her house and there was a lot of people that I didn't know and we got drinking and dancing and I ended up with some guy I had just met. We both got carried away and ended up in my friend's bedroom having sex. The worst part is she walked in on us. She didn't say anything, but just closed the door and didn't mention it to us. I haven't seen her since. I don't know whether I should just let it go and not mention it again, or should I apologize for my indiscretion. Super embarrassed, Brandi!*

Hi Brandi:

The New Year's Eve hangover! I think if you don't mention this it will always be hanging over your relationship with his person. Thank her for inviting you to her party, apologize for your indiscretion then let it go and do not bring it up again. We all mess up at one time or another. Happy New Year!

Email your questions to [voice@voicemagazine.org](mailto: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

# COMMANDANTE FARTETADO IN A PUNISHABLE CRIME

Commandante,  
what's your response to critics  
who insist that you're not a real leader— just an  
egomaniac with bad gas?

These  
critics are  
stupidhead ape-  
donkeys. Just  
look at my  
republic and you  
will see what a  
great leader is  
Commandante  
Fartetado!



Meanwhile, somewhere nearby . . .

What are we executing  
him for, anyway?

He refused to pull the  
Commandante's finger.



WRITTEN BY WANDA WATERMAN



**AUSU**  
ATHABASCA UNIVERSITY  
STUDENTS' UNION

This space is provided free to AUSU: The Voice does not create this content. Contact [ausu@ausu.org](mailto:ausu@ausu.org) with questions or comments about this page.

### Featured AUSU Member Service: AUSU Forums

AUSU forums provide an opportunity to talk online with other students.

AUSU forums is a student-only space to post messages for others to read and respond to. Discussions take place over time and remain online indefinitely. To start a discussion, post a message and come back later to check for replies. The system can e-mail you when replies are posted. Or, browse the older posts to see if someone already asked your question!

This is a great place to find out what the AU experience is like for others; share study tips; find out what others think about a course; get support when things get rough; and engage in discussion on an endless variety of topics.

Check it out at <http://www.ausu.org/phpBB3/index.php>

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

For links, see:

[http://counselling.athabascau.ca/assess\\_yourself.php](http://counselling.athabascau.ca/assess_yourself.php)

### AUSU Featured Groups & Clubs

Group Name: **AU – Faculty of Business**

Where: **Facebook**

Members: 1134

About: Members are all types of students, staff, and alumni with AU. The members of the group seem to

### IMPORTANT DATES

- Jan 14: AUSU Council Meeting
- Jan 30: Last business day to extend courses ending February 28
- February 10: Last day to register for courses starting March 1
- February 11: AUSU Council Meeting
- February 16: Family Day – AU & AUSU closed
- February 27: Last business day to extend courses ending March 31

support, encourage and give advice to each other on AU Faculty of Business topics.

Activity: Posts several times per week that are mostly news and information on the AU Faculty of Business.



### 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:*

### Build Leadership Skills

Being a student at AU creates some difficulties in being able to hone leadership skills, yet every employer values them. Fortunately, [lynda.com](http://lynda.com) has training on a wide range of career and business skills. The Build Leadership Skills is ideal for new grads, or anyone seeking employment while they study. This stream of courses will teach you:

- How to be a leader people love to follow.
- How to uncover your hidden strengths and talents.
- How to inspire your team.

Have a look at this playlist and start using the skills in your everyday interactions outside of school!

Courses: 7

Duration: 8h 52m

Skill Level: Appropriate for all

***Have you signed up for lynda? It's free for AUSU members. To learn more, check out [ausu.org/services/lynda.php](http://ausu.org/services/lynda.php)***

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# CLASSIFIEDS

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Classifieds are free for AU students! Contact [voice@voicemagazine.org](mailto:voice@voicemagazine.org) for more information.

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## THE VOICE

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[www.voicemagazine.org](http://www.voicemagazine.org)

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