

# THE VOICE

## MAGAZINE

Vol 23 Issue 20 2015-05-15

### Meeting the Minds

Dr. George Siemens, Conclusion

### All About the Benjamins, II

Here We Go Again?

### Interviewing AUSU

The New Exec Director

*Plus:*

*The Travelling Student*

*Did You Know? Awards For Grabs!*

*and much more!*



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# LETTERS TO THE EDITOR



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



## EDITORIAL

### Risky Business

Karl Low



Have you heard of Sayre's Law? It's basically stated as "In any dispute, the intensity of feeling is inversely proportional to the value of the issues at stake. That's why academic politics are so bitter."

Part of the reason for a student newspaper (or magazine, in this case) is to report on those politics. Ideally without becoming involved. But, as we've seen over the last few weeks, between AUSU council threatening to dissolve the magazine completely, executive honorarium increases, executives pulling down a critical article and even an entire issue of the magazine as it reports on them, it's easier said than done.

However, since nobody's ever accused me of being smart enough to know when to walk away, in this issue, I bring you in a second installment of It's All About the Benjamins. Go read it. Have a look at the documents I've linked and the numbers in them. Figure out some questions that you want AUSU to answer, and then, most importantly, attend the AGM so you can get those answers. Perhaps I'm a bit crazy for doing this, but it's important. AUSU is an organization I helped build, I know some of the good it can do for

students, and I know that the only way it will keep doing that good is if students like you are interested and involved enough to make it do so. That's part of why I took this job in the first place.

The other part, however, is exactly what you get from the rest of this issue. A lot of great material submitted by students, for students. In particular, check out Philip Kirkbride's Travelling Student and Barbara Lehtiniemi's interview with the new AUSU Executive Director, Karyna Hoch.

Also, if it's still Friday, the 15<sup>th</sup> when you're reading this, go immediately to the Did You Know? news item so that you can get your chance at some AU scholarship money. I've been told that a couple of the scholarships have not received any applicants yet, so if you can get yours in by the end of the day, you probably have a good chance to not only get a little extra cash (and who doesn't need that these days) but also put a scholarship on to your resume or post-graduate application.

We also have a full report of the first AUSU Council meeting chaired by Shawna Wasylyshyn where you can find out what reasoning they gave for the recent executive honorarium increases (spoiler: not much). And Deanna Roney takes on the debate of which type of exam is better, online or traditional paper and pen.

Plus the Writer's Toolbox gives away a secret that I've been using to edit submissions for a while now, and of course we have our regular selection of news, reviews, and entertainment articles to keep you busy while you're waiting for your marks to come in.

As always, enjoy the read!

# MEETING THE MINDS

## INTERVIEWS with AU's EDUCATORS



*Dr. George Siemens is the founder of the theory of connectivism in education. Recently, he kindly consented to be interviewed by Marie Well of The Voice Magazine. Dr. Siemens was happy to provide us with very in-depth answers, and this is conclusion to the three part interview. In case you missed them, you can read the [first](#) and [second](#) parts in our archives.*

**Marie Well: What is your particular approach to/philosophy concerning student evaluations?**

Dr. George Siemens: That is a great question, but difficult to address. I am interested in authenticity. That's probably the biggest concept that I would focus on, which is, does the assessment authentically evaluate what the student should know at that point in the course? Now, in some cases, it is not always possible to do that. Years ago, I was at Red River College, and I didn't like the approach that was being utilized in having students submit a paper, do multiple choice, and so on, so one of the things

I added was to do a series of interviews with students to determine just if they understood the course and to ask a series of questions on it.

Unfortunately, although I did go through that process, each interview takes thirty minutes, and all a sudden you have fifteen hours of interview time. It is a more authentic type of learning assessment, but unfortunately, it is time consuming, so you can't do that if you are teaching multiple courses. That is very difficult to make that kind of activity happen.

From an authenticity perspective, that is most critical: does it really reflect what the student knows? Additionally, are our assessment approaches reliable? Higher education systems are often not structured for someone to do that kind of reasonable analysis of depth of assessment.

Ultimately, the things that I have found most valuable for me to learn and to try to communicate or adopt in the teaching practices are for students. One of the things that is helpful academically is that, as a learner, you don't forget what that experience is like. To be a regular and consistent learner, you have opportunities to continually engage and to continually learn. When you do that, you remember what it is like being a student—the frustration of a course that is not well designed, or the frustration of an assignment that wasn't clearly communicated. Once you have that level of experience, it helps you stay grounded when you are teaching. It is almost this idea of the beginner's mind; where you want to experience the mindset the individuals' had when they were first involved in learning. You want to keep that fresh in your mind by continuing to be a learner and continuing to take courses.

***Marie Well: If you could wave a magic wand and change anything about the structure or proceedings of Athabasca University, what would it be?***

Dr. George Siemens: First of all, I think the challenge is that we are encountering in higher education in general are more and more of these intractable problems—and these are ones where there is not a clear answer. It is best seen as a complex system. A complex system is one that has multiple elements that connect in different ways. You don't always know the outcome, but if you change one part of the system, there are going to be effects on other parts of the system. The one, single cure-all is almost impossible in a complex environment. Social systems, for example, are inherently complex. That means not taking a particular solution, or one magic wand or silver bullet approach. What we actually need to do in order to be effective is to adopt a multiple lens approach to complex challenges. What has to change, instead, is our mindset with how you engage with complex problems so that you are taking a multidisciplinary, multi-lens approach to a challenge.

One of the most important areas that universities in general should be looking at is "how do you foster creativity and innovation in learners today?" It is easy enough with technology to automate parts of the learning experience or have students watch videos or so on, but it is much more difficult to foster creativity and innovation and passion. It is this idea that has been shared by [Stanford 2025](#) that tries to focus on this topic area of what universities will look like in the future. They have a good statement on the site: "In the future, students will have a mission, not a major." The idea is, what are you passionate about? What do you care about? What is important to you? What motivates you to be a better person or make the world a better place?

I think that idea of a mission and not a major is one that every university system needs to adopt. The primary way you are able to do that is by reducing the view that a single solution can be found to address complex problems.

***Marie Well: How do you engage student motivation in your online classroom environment?***

Dr. George Siemens: Motivation is a difficult challenge in any context because we first need to know our students in order to be able to motivate them. Sometimes in the online environment, there are a few barriers that make it perhaps a bit more challenging to get to know some of your students.

Generally, I would suggest that if you have relevant and topical ideas that are communicated to students in such a way that enables them to see themselves in those concepts or ideas, if students see value in something, then they are motivated to do it. Only when we see value and benefit does it become something that is more relevant to us. I think, from that end, my interest at least in things like learner motivation is really more focused on how we can broaden student's abilities to make something more relevant for themselves.

We can do that through a range of approaches. It could be that we do a better job of adding student control points into the curriculum where they are making decisions rather than just jumping through our hoops that we create as learning designers. We need to make sure that we are communicating in terms of their interests. The impact could be on a number of levels. It could be an impact that happens to that student's career. You could be able to say if you know this and can do this well, there are career opportunities. Those are some of the ways to drive motivation. Make things relevant to students, but also give students an opportunity to write themselves into the curriculum. That is, to be able to see the outcome of the benefits, the way in which it can make them a better person, and the way it can make the world a better place. You can't directly motivate someone, but you can set conditions under which people of different attributes will become motivated. Those conditions for creating motivation are what I would like to foster.

**Marie Well: Where do you see online technology heading in the distant or near future?**

Dr. George Siemens: This is a topic I just finished a paper on with The MOOC Research Initiative that was a grant from the Gates Foundation, lead by Athabasca University. One of the things we looked at was what is the next generation of educational technology. What will technology look like in the future for learning? This gets back to the point I made a little bit earlier that technology, essentially, will reflect the architecture of the Internet and that universities, then, will need to at least adapt to that kind of technology as well. We are going to continue to see, on the one hand, traditional systems of control that the university controls. These are things like management systems, Blackboard, Desire2Learn, and those will continue to make an impact for the organizations for learner enrolment and other things. That is the one camp. That will continue to be a factor, but not as prominent as in the past.

The other area of technology will be those that learners have control of. These will be toolsets that the individual student is able to control and to use based on how they want to use it. It is a distributed technology approach where instead of an institution owning our data, owning the technologies that we are using, we instead see that the individual student owns their own activity, owns their own digital identity, and so on. I'd say that is one of the most promising areas of future technology development in the education process that will start to emerge.



## Student Sizzle AU's Hot Social Media Topics

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

**AUSU Student Forums**

In the General Student Chat forum, user "highwood" seeks advice on whether to re-take a class in order to improve a grade.

**AthaU Facebook Group**

Joé wonders how long it takes for a course grade to be posted after the final exam is written. Michelle seeks guidance in formatting a list within a paragraph, using APA. Deanna looks for insight on course PHIL 333. Shari wants to know why the actual enrolment fee for a course was higher than AU's fee calculator.

Other postings include AU Alumni awards, myAU login woes, and courses BIOL 401, CMIS 351, HRMT 322, MATH 271, and NUTR 331.

**Twitter**

@AthabascaU tweets: "Congrats to GCAP Chair & Program Director Dr. Paul Jerry -Winner of the PAA's Excellence in Teaching Psychology Award <http://ow.ly/MOMdO>."

@AthabascaUSU tweets: Congratulations to new member of the #ableg @JasonJNixon! @AthabascaUSU announces executive changes here: [http://www.ausu.org/downloads/May\\_7\\_2015\\_Press\\_Release.pdf](http://www.ausu.org/downloads/May_7_2015_Press_Release.pdf)."



## It's All About the Benjamins Redux

Karl Low



*The Voice Magazine* has received documentation indicating that AUSU Council did some unusual things with the Executive and Staff wages in November and December. A source has contacted me, concerned about what AUSU has been doing with these wages, and provided me with the financial packages for October 2014 – January 2015 which were presented in the AUSU Finance Committee meetings. While any member of AUSU—that is, any current AU undergrad in a course for credit—can ask to view these financial documents themselves, these documents have not been provided to students, so my source is concerned about what might happen if their name is published.

For those who weren't here, or don't remember, in October, AUSU had a full-time executive director and two additional office staff. The gross wages of these staff members, paid semi-monthly, was \$6,914.81. The executive, \$4,228.57. These numbers come directly from their General Journal for October.

Then, at the end of October, AUSU and the Executive Director parted ways. We can see in the November General Journal that the General Salary for the Office Admin declines to \$3,067.17, a drop of \$3,847.64, which would be consistent with no longer having to pay the wages of the Executive Director. However, we can also see that the corresponding Executive amount jumps up to \$6,518.32, an increase of \$2,289.75 semi-monthly. Monthly, that figure works out to \$4,579.50. Yet no new executives were brought on board, and there were no motions listed in any public minutes to indicate that Council had approved higher honoraria for anybody on the Executive. To date, no reasons for this change, or even any indication of it, have been presented to AUSU members. However, it should be noted that at this rate, the yearly increase would have been over \$50,000.00 and would have rapidly exhausted the budgeted amount for Executive Wages.

So, the next month, the situation changes again. Now in the General Journal for December, the General Salary for the Office Admin is back up to \$6,914.81, the same as it was when AUSU had an Executive Director with over a decade of seniority handling all of their communications and graphic design work and the bulk of any website updates or IT development and changes. But AUSU had not hired an Executive Director at that point, nor would they do so for another few months, and any major website updates were being hired out to an external contractor. At the same time, the Executive Wages amount decreased to \$2,670.68. Again, however, no changes to the composition of the executive or their honoraria were ever announced to the membership.

The last general journal I have, from January, shows that this pattern of expenditures continued, although no motions or even indications that this was happening, or why, have ever been given by AUSU Council. I contacted the Executive of AUSU on Wednesday for any explanation or comment, but have yet to receive a response.

Fortunately, there is an upcoming AGM for students to attend where they can ask these questions of Council in person. Students who are concerned about what is happening in AUSU Council are urged to contact [ausu@ausu.org](mailto:ausu@ausu.org) and request details about how you can attend the upcoming AGM by teleconference. The AGM will be held on May 27 at 5:30 pm MST, and attendance is free.



## Primal Numbers

### Here Comes the Sun

S.D. Livingston



Maybe it's just that we endure long months of winter, or maybe it's that we have cloudy coasts. But the potential of solar power doesn't seem to have taken off. The argument has been that it's hard to convert to solar when the sun won't come out to play. But now that's all about to change, thanks to a battery that could store the sun's energy to power your home. It's good news—but just how easy is it to go off the grid?

The large-scale solar powered battery is the brainchild of Elon Musk. The same Elon Musk who's the CEO of both Tesla Motors and space technology company SpaceX. In this [CNBC video](#), Musk explains

his vision for the batteries to bring a "fundamental transformation of . . . how energy is delivered."

It's an ambitious plan. The unit is called the Powerwall, and it's a big, rechargeable lithium-ion battery that, well, gets mounted on a wall. It can be charged by the sun, store that energy, and used to power homes or, in the larger version, a business or even a utility. It's good-looking, too—a shiny, futuristic bit of gadgetry that would look right at home on a sci-fi movie set.

But cutting the utility cord won't be easy. First of all there's the cost. Right now the price per Powerwall unit is around \$3,000 in the US (Canadian prices are still being figured out). Not bad until you consider that you'll also need to install solar panels. A quick search shows that, in Canada, a typical installation on a single-family home will run about \$30,000 to \$40,000 dollars. Now add in the cost of a power inverter for your Powerwall, and don't forget about paying for removal and reinstallation of those solar panels when it comes time to repair or reshingle your roof.

Over time you'll get those costs back in the form of savings on your energy bill. Another perk is that many utility companies offer incentives for solar users, and some will buy excess power from individuals. Don't bet on those programs for the long haul, though. That's because the proportion of solar users is still low compared to the number of people that rely on the traditional grid. If millions more people start making the switch, the utility companies will have an abundance of homeowners to buy from. Simple supply and demand dictates that the price they'll pay for your extra energy will be sure to drop.

And what would happen to those programs if your public utility company became privatized? That's a very real possibility in Ontario right now.

But does that mean the Powerwall is a misguided idea? Not at all. In fact, Musk is right. It could truly revolutionize the delivery of energy.

The naysayers are also right, of course, when they point out that the technology is far from a bargain at this point. This [Forbes article](#) lays the numbers out well.

Yet, like most other inventions, the technology will no doubt cost less once it hits a saturation point. You only need to look at things like pocket calculators, laptops, and cell phones for proof of that. Hard to believe that back in the '60s, a desktop electronic calculator cost a thousand dollars. Install enough Powerwalls, improve the storage capacity, and there could soon come a day when we become millions of individual energy grids, supplying all our own energy needs thanks to the sun.

Harnessing solar energy as a clean, inexpensive alternative will take time. Especially since the traditional grid, in spite of its rising prices, is generally effortless and reliable. But if new types of power storage can hit critical mass, that early investment could pay off for generations—and electricity bills could become a thing of the past.

Here comes the sun indeed.

*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.*



## Council Connection

**Barbara Lehtiniemi**



May 13's AUSU council meeting turned into an unexpected marathon session, clocking in at just under two hours. When the meeting wound up at 7:27 pm it was too late to attend the AU Library's free orientation webinar, which finished at 7 pm.

The slowness of the meeting was partly due to the cancellation of the April council meeting. While there were only a couple additional agenda items to cover, there were, in most cases, two times the executive and committee reports. Add to the mix a new chairperson running the meeting, and time runs through the glass like sand.

After the approval of the agenda and the previous meeting's minutes, the next four items pertained to motions voted on before the meeting. All four motions were passed in April or earlier; three of them were voted on using e-mail, and one by telephone. For the May 13 meeting, council was only ratifying the vote on these motions—which simply confirms that the vote took place as stated—and the results become part of the minutes.

Because the motions were presented to council previously, there was no discussion on these items during the meeting. Each motion was read and the results of voting stated. Council then voted to ratify those motions. Four motions were dealt with quickly.

So, if you were hoping to learn why council voted to raise the honorariums of the three executive members of council, beyond what's stated in the motions, you will be disappointed. Nor will you find out who voted to approve the original motion and who abstained. On the [AUSU executive blog](#), it's stated that "None of the current Executive team voted in the motion; it passed 5-0 with the 3 Executive members abstaining from the vote."

What's not clear is which executive were in place when the vote was held; the date of the vote is not part of the information in the agenda, and no detail was provided on who abstained and for what reason(s.) The new executive team was in place April 1, but council had announced on March 19 that the new executive had "recently" been elected.

These four motions, previously voted on and carried, were ratified at the meeting: the first to raise the council executive honorarium, the second to transfer almost \$17K from a budget surplus in Office Wages to Executive Wages to cover adjustments to executive wages, the third to approve then-president Jason Nixon's request for an unpaid leave of absence from council, and the fourth to approve the appointment of Karyna Hoch to the position of Executive Director.

The latter two of those four motions, when they were first voted on, resulted in press releases, which you can read on the [AUSU Press Release](#) page. There were no press releases relating to the first two motions, but there was some information provided in April's [Executive Blog](#) apparently in response to student questions posted on Facebook.

The next six items, all carried forward from the agenda of the cancelled April 21 meeting, continued with policy review and revisions. As a meeting observer, I don't get a copy of any proposed policy changes, so I rely on the discussion (if any) during the meeting for information. The following policies all relate to Council Governance.

Policy 2.01 Conflict of Interest and Bias. According to discussion during the meeting, "not many changes" were being proposed. However, it was decided to table the motion until June in order to find out if there is an agreement with AU on certain points.

Changes to Policy 2.03 Officers Job Descriptions and Policy 2.06 Student Representation on AU Committees passed after brief discussions on wording.

Discussion on Policy 2.09 Delegation of Authority got hung up on a proposed wording change in section 2.09.04. The change suggested would have the Executive Director (ED) making decisions on operational issues "in consultation with the executive." Some councillors felt it would be hard to hold an ED accountable if they couldn't make decisions on their own and had to run everything by council. In the end, the proposed addition of "in consultation with the executive" was dropped.

In addition to proposed amendments to Policy 2.10 Executive Director, some councillors wanted added wording in section 2.10.10 that put a timeframe in place to replace an ED who had resigned or been terminated. Ultimately, a stipulation that the hiring process begin within 60 days was added.

The final policy reviewed, Policy 2.11 Committee Governance, spurred a lengthy discussion comparing current practice with the wording of the policy.

The latter portion of the meeting comprised the various reports from executive members of council as well as committees. Since there was no meeting in April, there were two months' worth of reports in most cases. Reports are not distributed to meeting observers, but some are later posted with the meeting minutes on the AUSU [Council Meeting Minutes](#) page.

Here's are some highlights from the discussions about the submitted reports:

- the President's report was submitted for March only, and was not discussed. Former president, Jason Nixon, joined the meeting to say farewell to council, and field any questions about his report (there were none.)
- it was observed that AU has yet to address its sustainability issues

- it was confirmed that Alex Poulton has resigned from AUSU council
- a new Executive Director and new Office Administrative Assistant were hired for AUSU's office. The new ED is now the Editor-in-Chief of *The Voice Magazine*, which is an "important buffer" between *The Voice* and AUSU.
- the Finance Committee reported no major concerns. *The Voice* financials were looked at and no concerns found.
- the Awards committee advised that one computer bursary and one travel bursary had been approved. The applications for the May 1 AUSU scholarship deadline were being reviewed.
- the Member Engagement committee advised that a student survey was launched last week. The AUSU newsletter should be utilized more as it is an "important key communication" with membership. Facebook and Twitter is being utilized more and motions voted on by e-mail are now being posted on Twitter.
- Karyna gave her last report as Office Coordinator; next month she will report as Executive Director. Student planner orders have slowed down; some planners will be taken to convocation for distribution. The office didn't receive a lot of applications for scholarships May 1. The healthcare plan continues to be monitored. The new Office Administrative Assistant, Donette, started in early May.

Here are a few things I hoped to hear about at the meeting but didn't:

- which councillors will fill the three executive roles for the remainder of the term? I understand Shawna Wasylyshyn has moved from VP External to President, and Corrina Green continues as VP Finance. Who is the VP External going forward? (Update: AUSU posted May 14, via Facebook and Twitter, that Bonita Arbeau is the new VP External.)
- how will the three vacant seats on council be dealt with? With the recent resignations of both Jason Nixon and Alex Poulton, and a third seat that's been vacant for a year, there are now only six members of student council, instead of nine. Will there be a by-election to fill the three seats for the remainder of the term?

Mark your calendar and e-mail your RSVP for the May 27 AUSU Annual General Meeting to [ausu@ausu.org](mailto:ausu@ausu.org). It will be held at 5:30 pm MST, and at this meeting, students have a voice! If you're an AUSU member, you can speak to and vote on each motion. This only happens once a year. You only have power if you exercise it!

## DID YOU KNOW?

## It's the Last Day to Apply for Scholarships!



Athabasca University offers a number of scholarships, and May 15<sup>th</sup> is the deadline to apply. If you haven't already, you still have a few hours to get your application in. There are a number of new scholarships this year, and I've been told that some (Such as the Albert & Pirkko Karvonen Environment Award) have received *no applications* yet. This means the chances to get one have never been better.

Find out more at: <http://news.athabascau.ca/news/deadlines-for-scholarships-may-15th/>



## The Mindful Bard

### Selma

Wanda Waterman



There's a Little Bit of Heaven in That  
Muddy Road to Freedom

Film: Selma

Director: Ava DuVernay

"Perhaps all the dragons in our lives are princesses who are only waiting to see us act, just once, with beauty and courage. Perhaps everything that frightens us is, in its deepest essence, something helpless that wants our love."  
- Rainer Maria Rilke, *Letters to a Young Poet*

If you've ever taken a huge leap into the unknown only to be surprised on the other side by a host of loving arms waiting to catch you, you'll have an inkling of the sentiments of the activists who took part in the three historic protest marches from Selma to Montgomery, Alabama in 1965.

The first march took place on March 7, 1965 and was soon monikered "Bloody Sunday" because of the violence the police unleashed on the unarmed marchers when they crossed the bridge into Montgomery.

The second march, now joined by hundreds of white supporters from across the country, took place on March 9. This march was lead by Martin Luther King Jr., who, on leading the marchers across the bridge and seeing the police part to let them pass, had a sudden instinct that lives would be at risk, and so turned the marchers back. That night in Selma, racists murdered one of the marcher's participants—civil rights activist James Reeb, a white pastor from Boston.

A third march, lead by James Bevel, Hosea Williams, Martin Luther King, Jr., and John Lewis, was held on March 21. By this time the crowd of marchers had grown to at least 3000, and they made it across the bridge.

In this film we see Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., civil rights leader and member of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC), being awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1964. In the next scene a group of adorable African-American youngsters are walking downstairs at the 16th Street Baptist Church dressed in their Sunday best, chattering happily, just before a terrific explosion robs them of their lives.

In Selma, Alabama, Annie Lee Cooper tries to register to vote. The registrar displays a complete lack of southern manners, but Cooper, clearly very nervous, guards her composure as she's asked to recite the constitution, then name how many judges sit in Alabama. The registrar is clearly annoyed that she's able to comply, and so asks her to name every one of the judges. When she can't, he rejects her application.

(In a delightfully appropriate casting decision, this role was given to Oprah Winfrey, one of the richest and most influential women in America today. Point well taken.)

These kinds of barriers to African American enfranchisement were the focus of the Selma marches. Sure, there

were lots of issues, but this one had top priority. Why? For one thing, their country had promised it. For another, they knew that if they could vote for their presidents, governors, and local officials, they could protect themselves from the deadly racism they were enduring as well as improve the conditions of their lives.

The film loses points for some contrived-sounding dialogue and a few questions of historical accuracy. The large number of Jewish participants in the march, for example, wasn't shown in the film, not even Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel, who appeared with King in photographs of the third march. Also, according to SCLC activist and later mayor of Atlanta, Andrew Young, the relationship between Johnson and King was not as strained as the movie makes it appear.

But the few points lost are more than made up for by the fact that this is not only a moving and compassionate depiction of a great historical event but also an extremely practical introductory guidebook for social activists.

Unlike many activists today who simply embrace the latest cause to impress the folks down at the vegan restaurant, being an activist was no feather in the caps of Selma marchers, whose very lives depended on winning this fight. Sound strategies were essential, and the organisers had somehow managed to figure out what would work and what wouldn't.

One major practical lesson learned from this story is the importance of raising the consciousness of those *outside* the afflicted group in order to exert pressure on its opponents. The Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) had focused on raising black consciousness in order to increase the number of blacks registered to vote, but King was all about raising *white* consciousness, a tactic that in the end proved highly effective.

King also used an effective formula— "negotiate, demonstrate, resist"— and was relentless in carrying it out. The third part of that formula came in handy when responses to the first two were weak. The government could refuse to negotiate and could ignore demonstrations, but it was no match for a stubborn refusal to quit.

Another important tactic was that the civil rights movement didn't shy from danger; in fact its leaders deliberately sought dangerous situations because they knew this was the best way to draw public attention to the crimes of their enemies.

That this movement rested on a firm spiritual foundation is a fact often ignored back in the sixties, both by secular activists who saw religion as part of the establishment and by religious people who couldn't reconcile religious life with political action. In retrospect we can see how much a spiritual foundation grants a mysterious power to acts of resistance, something that white activists have only recently been willing to acknowledge.

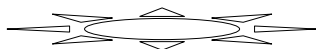
Another plus was King's sublime eloquence, his ability to rouse passions, encourage the fainthearted, and impart profound and relevant truths in simple metaphorical language, a skill he owed to the preaching traditions of the south. Copyright issues prevented director Ava DuVernay from using the original transcripts of King's marvelous speeches, but her script does a fabulous job of conveying the beauty of his language.

*Selma* is a stellar reminder that if you have the courage to risk your life to walk through a door into who knows what, you may just find a host of angels waiting there to join you.

*Selma* manifests eight 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'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 gives me tools of kindness, enabling me to respond with compassion and efficacy to the suffering around me.
- It renews my enthusiasm for positive social action.
- It makes me appreciate that life is a complex and rare phenomena, making living a unique opportunity.



## Interview with AUSU

### The New Executive Director, Karyna Hoch

Barbara Lehtiniemi



*On April 27, AUSU introduced its new Executive Director, Karyna Hoch. Karyna has been with AUSU since 2009 as Office Coordinator. Two weeks after beginning her new role as ED, and in the midst of training new Office Coordinator Donette Kingyens, Karyna took the time to speak with The Voice Magazine writer Barbara Lehtiniemi about her new role at AUSU.*

#### **You've been with AUSU since 2009. Did you ever expect to be Executive Director?**

Never. In fact, during my initial interview for the Office Coordinator's position, the then-Executive Director, Tamra Ross, asked me where I could see myself in five years. She cautioned me that the only position I could move into at AUSU would be hers. I didn't know if I'd ever want all that responsibility. As the years went on I found myself quite satisfied with the Office Coordinator's position. I was content and assumed I would work many years under Tamra.

Even when the ED position became open, I didn't really consider moving into that role. I just assumed they would interview for the position and I'd continue on as Office Coordinator working under a new ED. It wasn't until about two months ago, when I was asked if I would consider the position that I began thinking about it.

#### **Being a long-time AUSU employee must be an advantage to this position. What experience from your former position of Office Coordinator will be your biggest asset in your new position?**

I think it's knowing the fundamentals of how the office is run. Also, having worked with a variety of AUSU student councillors over the past 6 years, and having made connections with AU staff, I have a solid grasp of the structure behind AU and AUSU.

#### **Every job has a learning curve. What skill will you most need to develop in this position?**

For me it's the governance aspect. Tamra, the former ED, was proficient in that and as Office Coordinator I never had any real need to learn governance in a detailed way. It's going to be a challenging case of learning as I go. Given the circumstances of the past few weeks it will be a bit of trial by fire!

**What do you see as your most urgent priority as ED?**

It will be maintaining stability while we rebuild AUSU and deal with the changes. We have a new president on council, the number of councillors has been depleted to six, and we have new staff. I want to see us evolve toward growth.

**At the end of your first year, what would most like to have accomplished?**

It's a bit difficult to answer because in less than a year we'll have another election for student council. However, what I'd like is to have the three executive positions on council and the AUSU staff to feel comfortable together. In order to serve the students we need to work together, consult the members, and come up with tangible benefits to offer AU students.

**The AUSU office has been understaffed for a number of months. How have things been getting done and what plans are in place to re-staff the office?**

I'm pleased to say that we have a new Office Administration Assistant, Donette Kingyens, who started in early May. For the month of April, I was on my own but the volume of inquiries from students was relatively low (thank goodness it wasn't September!) so I was able to manage with a bit of juggling. It was a more significant challenge when we lost Tamra last October. Fortunately, at that time, Kim Newsome and Corrina Green helped out and we split up the work between the three of us. Now, there's two of us in the office and as we implement new services, we'll evaluate if we need a third staff member again.

**The former ED did a lot of the website updates and technical stuff. How will that type of work be handled going forward?**

We are using the services of a contract IT person. She and Tamra had worked on technical projects together previously, but eventually Tamra took over the lion's share of those duties. This contract person is familiar with the design of our website as a whole and has some positive suggestions for improvements that we can work toward.

**What would you most like to see from the newly-configured AUSU student council?**

I'd like to see a renewed focus on the members. I believe we need to have an understanding of what our members want in regards to their university experience at AU, so that we can better understand what we at AUSU can do to assist.

**Why should students care about AUSU?**

I'd love to see our members more involved because when they are better engaged in the AU and AUSU community, they benefit from the whole experience. Right now, we offer services like [lynda.com](http://lynda.com), and [SmartDraw](#) to our members, and we've recently implemented a [health care plan](#). We're always on the lookout for ways we can improve our members' engagement within the AU community. It makes being part of AU more enjoyable for students.

**What new projects are in the works that AUSU members will be interested in?**

Currently we're working on a mobile app—AUSU is moving into the future! We're hoping for a September launch. And we're in discussions on a plan to offer mental health support. The intent is to engage an external provider to offer counselling sessions to assist with, for example, the stress students face with school, work, and family. This plan could become a reality in the next few months. I'm pleased to see that new council president, Shawna Wasylyshyn, wants to poll the members to find out what the members want.



**In your bio on the AUSU site, you state that "AUSU members who are able to connect by networking and building relationships with others students enjoy their AU time significantly more." What networking suggestions do you have for students who are flung across the country and the globe?**

I find that most students prefer the unofficial AU Facebook group, with over 1600 members, to connect with other students. We also have the AUSU Forum pages, which have not seen as much traffic since we joined Facebook and Twitter. If students want to feel even more patched in, they can participate in the AUSU student council elections early in 2016, either by running for a council seat or voting in the election. We also have The Voice Magazine, where students can share their views and experiences and also read other students' views.

There used to be more in-person student meet-ups; for a time the Toronto meet-up thrived. There hasn't been as much success in other cities. At AUSU, we're always open to suggestions on how to help students feel engaged with other students and with AU.

**Do you read *The Voice Magazine*?**

I do, and more so in the last few weeks! I think recent events have brought more coverage for *The Voice*. On a regular basis, I read it once or twice a month

**What AU course are you taking right now?**

I'll be finishing my current course in June: PSYC 388, *Introduction to Counselling*. I love this course—I'm finding it enormously helpful when students call in to AUSU. This course gives me the tools to listen and to provide comfort when students are extremely upset so that I can piece together what the issue is and how to help. Next I'll be taking PSYC 395, *Forensic Psychology*. This is more for personal interest—for fun—rather than because I need it for my degree program.

**What's typically your first thought upon waking each morning?**

"How do I get my six-year-old son prepared and dressed and out the door in 35 minutes?"

**Do you sing when you're driving?**

I do. Quite loud.

**Blue ink or black ink?**

I use an extra fine point Sharpie in black ink.

**If you were sentenced to life in prison (unjustly, of course) and could only take one book and one movie with you, which would you choose?**

For a book, I'd choose The Bible. I'm a believer, and I think I'd need the comfort of reading in the scriptures about those who have been unjustly persecuted. For a movie, I think I'd need some laughter to distract me from my situation. It's kind of low-brow humour, and not in keeping with my book choice, but I would choose *Bridesmaids*.

**Is there anything else you want to tell students about AUSU?**

I'd like to add that, as we're re-building the organization, we really want to hear from students during this process. We want to rebuild an AUSU that students feel is helpful for them. I would implore members to come to one of our meetings to find out what we do. This is really a good time for students to give us input on what they'd like from AUSU.

## Writing versus Typing

Deanna Roney



I have seen mentioned a few times on Athabasca University social pages questions about preference to writing longhand versus typing. Typically I think the preference lies in generation: what did you grow up doing? More recently, the question came up regarding paper and online exams. There seems to be some consensus for math exams to be paper, as it makes writing out equations easier. Of course, the thought of writing or typing math equations make me cringe. My exam experience resides, predominately, in English exams.

Some have said that they prefer the ease of cutting and rewriting a section when the exam is online. Rather, than crossing out and attempting to add in, or restarting on another page. Some are relieved they no longer have to make their chicken scratch legible. Some find typing more time consuming and difficult. Staying with the chicken analogy, the "hunt and peck", while perfectly legible, can take up precious minutes of a timed exam. The ability to cut and rewrite a section, or move it, does not always make up for the time lost hunting and pecking for keys. Both paper exams and online exams have merit when it comes to exams with essay questions.

I have a difficult time getting behind either paper or online formats based on longhand versus typing; maybe I am in that "in-between" generation, or maybe just plain strange as I enjoy longhand writing. I like online exams for one main reason: it cannot get lost in the mail. None of my exams have been permanently lost but they have been temporarily misplaced, two in a row. Having an exam go astray is extremely stressful. So I have a preference for the online format. But, for the writing part of the exam, I have a difficult time deciding.

I like that online I do not have to worry about my writing being legible. My writing can get so messy that at times even I cannot read it, and during exams I have to make a conscious effort to write slowly and form my letters correctly. I also have no issues typing, and I like to think my speed is fairly decent. When typing I do not need to be concerned about having to write slowly or legibly.

But there is merit to paper exams, and I enjoy longhand writing my answers. I connect to the work better, and I feel less committed to what I am writing; which, I know, sounds backwards. But, for me, typing feels like the "polished" step. In all my assignments, articles, and online exams I longhand the first draft: every time. For online exams the ease of mind tips the scale of preference. Since I prefer to longhand my first draft, organize my thoughts, and I can type fairly quickly, I found one very simple solution: bring blank paper. I always bring a few sheets of paper on which I can create outlines, write answers, and jot down notes before committing to any single thought. The invigilator has to go through all my paper before I am allowed to bring it into the exam, and of course at the end of the exam she collects it all and, I presume, shreds it.

Online exams versus paper exams both have merit, and it largely depends on subject matter. For myself, though, I think I will stick with the peace of mind that comes with the online format, and continue to make my invigilator sift through my stack of blank paper. After all, why not have the best of both worlds?

## Writer's Toolbox

### The Ears Have It

Christina M. Frey



You've been through that essay—or novel—so many times that your eyes start to glaze over in the first paragraph. Now it's time for the final read-through, and you're sure there are typos you'll catch—or you would catch, if you weren't so burned out. So where can you turn if you can't trust your own eyes?

Your ears.

There are a lot of methods proofreaders use—like reading text from back to front—but that doesn't always work, especially if you're not just looking for typos and stray marks but also need to make sure the structure of a particular sentence is on target, or that you didn't inadvertently omit a word here or there. That's where the ears become one of the most valuable pieces in your editing toolbox.

#### Read aloud

Reading aloud isn't just for parents and little kids. In fact, writing and editing professionals use it all the time as a way of taking in text from a different perspective. It forces you to slow your reading down, making it more likely you'll spot errors, and it allows you to stand a little more firmly in your reader's shoes—something that's not always easy to do when you're breezing through something you've read dozens of times already.

It's normal to feel a little silly or awkward when you're reading your own work aloud the first time, but after a while you'll wonder why you ever hesitated. Just remember to really speak out loud, and don't be afraid to use your outside voice—muttering words increases your reading speed and can cause you to miss errors you'd have otherwise caught.

If you're working on a really long piece, especially fiction, you can try varying your voice to keep your attention from slipping. If you've ever wanted to perfect your British accent, now is the time—just don't get too carried away with the acting! The goal is to make yourself enunciate the words you're saying.

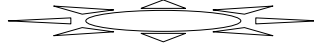
#### Be a good listener

An alternative way of using your ears to edit your work is to get someone to read aloud to you. This can be a person—but it can just as easily be your computer, your smart phone, or your tablet. There are dozens of apps and software programs that either read basic text aloud (Kindle has this option) or allow you to not just listen but also follow along with a cursor in the text. I use NaturalReader for my editing (there's a free version available), but there are many other helpful programs out there.

The disadvantage of being read to is the opportunity for distraction, so make sure the voice is set to a slow enough speed that you're forced to stay on track. I find that plugging into earphones helps me focus, as does assuming a slightly more uncomfortable position—lying on the couch would be great, but getting too casual makes it less likely I'll give the text the attention it needs.

Next time you're in the final self-editing stage, let your ears take some of the burden. You'll be amazed at what a difference it makes!

*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](#).*



## Turning Off to Tune In

**Barbara Lehtiniemi**



I have a strange relationship with the radio. At home, I seldom listen to the radio. I turn it on briefly to listen to the news or a specific program, then turn it back off. I don't use the radio for background noise; I find it rather irritating.

In the car, things are different. The radio is on nearly all the time, incessantly bleating out news, traffic reports, music, and current affairs. Sometimes I'm actively listening to the radio, and other times it's doing little more than masking the noise of tires on asphalt.

One day, I turned the car radio off. After decades of driving with the radio on, the silence was initially unnerving. Could I stand it for a fifty-minute drive? Would habit overcome self-control and compel me to snap the radio back on? It seemed strange that, while I could barely tolerate the radio *on* at home, I could barely tolerate the radio *off* in the car.

I experienced something extraordinary during the drive. Without music or radio chatter to absorb my attention, my awareness of my surroundings expanded. Driving along country roads, I noticed—and felt a connection with—signs of spring. Greening trees with a white blanket of trilliums below, vees of Canada Geese pointing north across the sky, and neat brown rows of freshly-sown fields, all contributed to my awareness of the season. With the radio on I *see* those things. But with the radio off, I *notice* them.

Soon I forgot about the silence. What attention I didn't need for driving became absorbed in my surroundings. My head pivoted from side to side to take in as much as I could. I was driving a familiar route yet I was seeing things with fresh eyes and keen interest.

I saw livestock—cows, sheep, goats, and llamas—cooling themselves in shady spots and, I imagine, enjoying the outdoors after a winter spent confined to barns. I saw a hunter's blind (how long has that been there?) on the border between a field and forest. A few kilometres later, I saw a deer bounding across a field, its tail wagging like a dog's. I rolled down my window and heard birds chattering and lawn mowers humming. The air was scented with cut grass, soil, and freshness. (Yeah, and manure, but it's not an unpleasant smell when at a comfortable distance.)

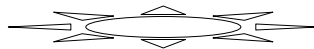


When I drive with the radio on, I reflected, I feel like my car is a self-contained bubble, moving—untouched—through the landscape. My focus is inside: the radio, my thoughts, my car. My attention is only outside as much as is needed to navigate my private bubble along the road.

Quieting the radio quieted my thoughts and brought me into the landscape. Instead of my usual thought-stream of planning the next hours and days, I was fully in the moment, physically and mentally. It was like meditative driving: still driving, but with a calm mind and a clear awareness.

What began as an experiment in self-control and habit-breaking, blossomed into an exercise in mindfulness. Turning the radio off tunes me in to the world. My world extends beyond the hood of my car: it's full-colour, real, and I'm in it, not just passing through it.

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



## In Conversation with Moondog Matinee

## Wanda Waterman



*Moondog Matinee is a Reno-based band that distills the history of whatever is most rousing in rock, country, blues, and soul. (Watch their dance-happy performance of "Wild Way" [here](#) and listen to "Ghost Dime" [here](#).) Moondog Matinee was selected as a Red Bull Sound Select artist and voted Best Band in Northern Nevada by the Reno News and Review. This summer they'll be promoting their second album, Carry Me, Rosie, by touring the west coast. Recently the band took the time to talk to Wanda Waterman about their lifestyle, inspirations, and the meaning of "ghost dime."*

**The first question on everyone's mind is going to be this: are you all clean livin' or not?**

Well, our singer does eat only organic food!

**What was your most beneficial educational experience?**

Tough question to answer as a band. We probably all have different inspirations for doing what we do, and the way we do it. Certainly some of the other amazing artists we've performed with, met, and even just witnessed all have a part in our individual and collective developments as artists and as human beings.

**What was the most mesmerizing musical experience of your life?**

As a band, it's probably safe to say the most mesmerising musical experience of our band's life was getting to perform in San Francisco with Ike Stubblefield. The man is a legend in the industry, and just watching him warm up and get ready for the set was an entirely unique and humbling experience.

**What's your favourite instrument to play and why?**

We recently picked up a pan flute and it has, collectively, become our all-time favorite instrument to play, even though we're all incredibly terrible at it!

**Has anything funny or strange ever happened to you in the recording studio or on the stage?**

During the recording of our upcoming album, *Carry Me, Rosie*, we did have the police called on us in the middle of the night. We were recording the album in a cabin in the woods of northern California and thought we were a little more isolated in terms of noise than we actually were! Oops!

**I'm assuming you got your name from the 1973 album by The Band, and I can hear elements of The Band in your tracks. Are you big fans of The Band?**

We did get our name from The Band and we are in fact all huge fans of The Band. When we all go without shaving for awhile, we can pull off a pretty close image of them as well.

**Why did you call this EP "Carry Me, Rosie"?**

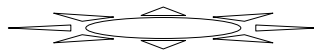
We named this album after the beloved school bus we tour in. Subsequently she broke down on our last tour and we had to leave her in Seattle for a few weeks.

**Did you write the lyrics for "Ghost Dime"? If so, can you tell us something about the story narrator character?**

We did write the lyrics, and the story is far more rudimentary than it may first appear. Pete had closing duties at our local bar on a nightly basis, and night after night, no matter how much he swept, mopped, dusted, and long after the doors had been locked, there was guaranteed to be a dime lying around on the floor somewhere. Either he had holes in his pocket or there was some very mischievous other-worldly being hanging out after hours ...

*(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.

**Study Tips from a Semi-Anonymous Friend**

*There is nothing more that The Study Dude wants for you than to write the speech that elevates the world into a new thought paradigm.*

*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.*

This week's article probes the book *Rhetorical Devices: A Handbook and Activities for Students*. Most keen writers crave knowledge of as many rhetorical devices as possible. These

simple but potent little devices forge tactics that will embellish any of your academic writing projects.

## Step-aside for the Zeugma

*I lost my patience and my watch.* That is a zeugma.

Tightening your writing, while making it clever, serves as the aim of every writing aficionado. Weeding out unnecessary words—condensing—lies at the heart of good writing. Make people ponder and reflect on your words. As I said in a previous article, double meanings convey emotional impact, especially when the two meanings both hold relevance for the storyline.

Zeugmas, as you will see, add nuance and flare to your writing. The combining of two unrelated items by joining them together with a single word fosters reflection and thought.

Prestwick House (2007) demonstrates the usage, stunning and profound, of the zeugma strategy:

- A zeugma occurs when two or more items in a sentence are linked together unexpectedly by a shared word. *He stole the ham and my heart*--here, the words ham and heart are linked together by the word stole, but each of the two connections has a different meaning. Zeugmas follow these patterns: "subjects linked by a verb, pronouns by nouns, direct objects by verbs, adjectival phrases by verbs, etc." (p. 169).
- Linking the words together with a verb placed at the end of the sentence is one stylistic usage of zeugma--*out of time and through the woods he ran*.
- Zeugmas reduce repetitiveness, tightening up a sentence and making it more coherent.

## Such Is a Hyperbaton, Helpful!

One thing I loathe is figuring out whether an unusual sentence order clashes with all the rules of writing or not. I have grown accustomed to removing as many incidents of the verb form "to be" (passive) from my writing, and constructing new sentences without this verb form challenges me persistently. Rewriting sentences to exclude the passive verb form enlivens writing, forges new creative connections, and activates an active voice.

So, learning of the hyperbaton, which consists of unusual word orders, thrilled me. Breaking the mould, or at least forging a new one, should be every creative writer's aim. Prestwick House (2007) shows how to enrich your writing with this rhetorical device:

- Hyperbaton juxtaposes words in unusual word orders. One such usage of hyperbaton involves placing an adjective after the noun it modifies: *the sun, melancholy yet uplifting*.
- Another usage of hyperbaton is removing the verb from the usual subject verb object order and placing the verb at the end of the sentence: *He his daughter and dog loved*.
- Another hyperbaton strategy involves couching the noun between two adjectives: *the beautiful agent, restless, cringed at the sound of the doorknob turning*. Here, the words "beautiful" and "restless", two adjectives, sandwich the noun "agent".

## Asyndeton/polysyndeton

Have you ever viewed a list, connected with the word "or", puzzling over why half the time, each item is connected with the word "or" and the other half of the time, the series only ends with a single "or"? A PhD student drafting his dissertation asked me a similar question, yet, in spite of my undergraduate education at the time, I had no answer. I merely fabricated a guess, dismissing it as such.

If a PhD student perplexes over the use of the conjunction "or" in a list, chances prevail that we all muddle over it from time-to-time.

Your confusion, however, is about to wash away. Prestwick House (2007) demonstrates the multiple formats that abound for using conjunctions in a series.

- An asyndeton omits all conjunctions in a list or between clauses. For instance, you could say "the dog, the cat, the bird, all savoured the sun's glow." This breaks the usual word order of putting an "and" between the final and immediately preceding words in the list. It provides a fast energy, as if the list could go on in the reader's mind.
- A polysyndeton adds a conjunction between every single item in the list or in the series of clauses. For instance, you could say "the dog and the cat and the bird all savoured the sun's glow." When using polysyndeton, the punctuation is left up to the reader. For example, you could say "The dog, and the cat, and the bird all savoured the sun's glow", incorporating a comma (or otherwise omitting the commas) after each item in the list. The polysyndeton creates a climactic allure and should be therefore used sparingly.
- These rhetorical devices can come across as grammatical errors, so use them selectively.

### **Repeat and Reap the Rewards; Repeat the Anaphora/Epistrophe/Symploce**

Some of the best speeches throughout history use words repeated at either the beginning, the end, or both the beginning and end of sentences or phrases.

I once held a big awareness event for a local charity, hosted by my favourite news anchor, Daryl Janz. As his day-to-day job entailed reading scripts on air, it seemed not only practical, but also fashionable, to have a PhD student draft a compelling script for him. The script was succinct, mobilizing a variety of rhetorical devices, and, after the event, people commented on how amazed they were with Daryl. He stole the hearts of the audience.

While the speech may not have implemented much of the anaphora, epistrophe, or symploce, as you will soon discover, Prestwick House (2007) makes these devices accessible for even the most fledgling to advanced writer:

- An anaphora occurs when a word is repeated at the beginning of successive sentences or clauses. *He slept in the cold of night. He slept underneath the bridges. He slept without consciousness of his own sanity.* This device creates a climactic feel.
- An epistrophe is when a word or phrase repeats at the end of successive sentences or clauses: *Servitude begets freedom. Love begets freedom. Freedom begets more freedom.* This device produces the effect similar to that of a punctuation mark.
- A symploce is when a word or phrase repeats at the beginning of each sentence or clause while another word or phrase repeats at the end: "We enjoy life when we know ourselves to be free of temptation and sin, but we enjoy life also when we give ourselves completely to temptation and sin" (p. 187).

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.

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Prestwick House (Pub.). (2007). *Rhetorical Devices: A Handbook and Activities for Students*. US: Prestwick House.



## Music Review

### Oakville Ontology

**Samantha Stevens**



**Album:** *Oakville Ontology*

**Artist:** Patrick Ames

One of the reasons that I love music so much is that, as an art, it forces us to constantly think differently about the world around us. It is through music that we can achieve the most heavenly harmonies and diabolical drumbeats. It is also a medium through which the young can question the ways of the time, and the old can share some hard won wisdom. As well, music has the ability to transcend language, culture, stereotypes, and lifetimes. Patrick Ames's songs have all of these elements, and also teaches us that music has no limits.

Patrick first began performing at coffeehouses during the 70s. After spending years working in the tech publishing business, Patrick began to seriously focus on his music over the last decade using the lessons that he learned practicing during the previous 30 years.

Released in October last year, *Oakville Ontology* was Patrick's second album. Although I am rarely a fan of Americana and Folk, Patrick's sound is timeless, and his lyrics are full of rich wisdom and astute observations. There are also hints of Jazz and Funk in his music that remind me of a mix between Johnny Cash, Arcade Fire, and Bob Dylan.

"Kickstand" is perhaps my favourite track on this album. The sound is fuller than the other tracks on the album, plus the deep bass, rhythmic drums, and hypnotizing guitar bring to life a style that isn't typically heard day-to-day. The combination of Motown, rock, blues, and psychedelic is superbly done. However, be prepared for the lengthy 8 minutes of pulsating tempo that will leave you in a gently swaying trance.

"How to Kill a Protest Song" is perhaps one of the most thought provoking ballads that I've heard in a very long time. True to the protest songs of old, the lyrics discuss the interplay between politics, culture, and music. However, as an updated version of the protest ballads, Patrick also examines the modern response to similar themes. The accompanying psychedelic sound is splendidly matched. But, like "Kickstand", the track is very long at over 9 minutes.

Other than these two songs and Patrick's obvious talent, however, the remainder of the album doesn't capture my attention. While the lyrics of each song are compelling, and the instruments are expertly played, overall the album lacks the lustre that it could have had. Most of the singing tends to echo too much, an effect that can be influential when used properly, but quickly loses its charm when overdone. Although I enjoyed the couple of songs I mentioned, the echoey singing prevented me from enjoying the rest of the album.

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

## The Fit Student: Mitigate Distractions and Stay Focused

Marie Well



Student fitness requires learning at optimal physical and mental performance. Studying requires enormous energy—energy that we can't afford to deplete by spending time on distractions. Our bodies burn so much energy throughout the day that any redirection of that vitality on something irrelevant or superfluous exhausts our supply. With studying, every ounce of energy we can muster for the tasks at hand remains essential to our success as students.

And have you ever spent the day multitasking in such a frenzy that your ability to concentrate reduces to nil? Have you ever had that sensation that anything you read, or more accurately reread, seems incomprehensible due to the amount of stress and burden you experience?

Well, Peter Bregman in his book *18 Minutes: Find Your Focus, Master Distractions, and Get the Right Things Done* provides savvy tips and tricks for ensuring your study sessions start and finish with a clear mind.

### Accomplish Tasks without Struggling

Bregman suggests crafting a list of activities that you are either passionate about or long to try. Once the list finalizes, consider the activities you would normally perform alone and consider how to perform these activities with other people. For me, I love everything from media and public relations to graphic design to reading, often engaging in reading sessions alongside my true love. The togetherness of the activity makes for wonderful hours spent doing what I love in the companionship of a loved one. I also make book covers for people I love, collaborating with them to bring a product to fruition. These moments far exceed my need for belonging than a mere social gathering could possibly offer. The working together for a common goal or the sharing of time in common interests makes life fun and intriguing. Once you decide what your favourite task or bucket list activities consist of, go ahead, try them out with someone other than yourself. Other people—especially sharing with other people—make the world meaningful and worthwhile. Just choose your companions wisely.

### Select Five Big Activities that You Wish to Achieve

Bregman says to fill out a table with five major accomplishments you'd like to achieve within the next year. These headings should be general enough for you to fill in related sub-activities under each heading. Your sixth table heading should involve superfluous activities that should take up less than 5% of your time. Once you fill out your chart, ensure that your activities consist mainly of these five key objectives. In doing this, you will produce a chart that guides your choices of activities day by day. The chart focuses your activities on key goals, ensuring your productivity meets your long-term objectives. My five goals consists of writing articles, ebooks, and books; fostering my relationship with my loved one through shared activities and service; spending time daily with God, whether I study God from my Christian identity repository or expand into Hinduism, or Sikhism, or Buddhism, or the Koran, or some other moral delight for curiosity's sake; creating and publishing media; and learning. Anything that falls outside of this rubric is secondary, filtered into my 5% activity slot. Already, this year I've achieved four of my New Year's Resolutions by slotting out my core activities and adhering to top priorities most days.

### Aim So That Failure Seems More Probable

Bregman posits to make our goals so lofty that the probability of success is only 50 to 70%. With such a likelihood of failure, we must learn to embrace failure as part of thinking big. In other words, if you plan big goals, expecting to fail nearly half the time, then you planned wisely. When you do fail, analyze the reason for your failure, and then try again with a new action plan. One time, I looked through job postings during a graduate program, finding a position I felt completely unqualified for during a downturn in the market economy. My true love encouraged me to go ahead and apply, assuring me that I was overqualified, and sure enough, the company eagerly hired me, offering me a wage well above my highest expectations, and I went on to outperform all of my predecessors in the position. Had I listened to my gut, I would have sidestepped the application process in favour of something I felt more consistent with my meagre qualifications, thereby losing out on the spectacular opportunity that came to fruition.

### Make Your Work Enjoyable

Bregman fantasizes a number of ways to make work fun. For instance, he suggests collaborating with others on a common goal is the key to enjoyment in the working environment. You could even set up prizes for activities to motivate people, such as an iPod or a Nintendo. I believe that academic book clubs, school newspaper journalism, school debate club participation--and, most ideally, school journal publishing are prime means for collaborating with others on meaningful, academic-related projects. A lot of local organizations willingly donate prizes for recognition. Once, I accumulated rows and rows of prizes for a charity that prior to me had a meagre silent auction. The charity made a killing through me sending out a prize request letter to big companies listed on a single database. So, it is easy to gather prizes. When you decide on group activity that will further your interest, certainly equip the gatherings with prizes for performance. Everyone loves prizes.

There you have it: ways to make you a mentally fit learner. The leaner your body and the thicker your brain, the better results you will produce.



*See that cool stuff there? That's a sample of what students who get interviewed for The Voice Magazine's Minds We Meet column get in the mail, just for talking with a fellow AU student for a while and letting us report the results!*

*Sound good to you? Sounds good to us too! So let us know if you'd like to be featured in The Voice Magazine by writing us at [voice@voicemgazine.org](mailto:voice@voicemgazine.org). We'll hook you up and you can help your fellow students get a feel for what amazing people are on this journey with them!*

**WRITE  
FOR THE VOICE** & **MAKE SOME  
CASH**

## The Travelling Student Kookaburra

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 the story of how Athabasca University has allowed me to create my own study abroad program. In the last issue, Matt and I were hired by a cherry orchard in Young, Australia. After being hired we set up camp at the farm.*

The first day started around 5:00am with me smothering my head with a pillow to drown out the cackling laugh of the Kookaburra. I'd become accustomed to the sound over the next few days but, like a buzzing alarm, it never gets any less annoying. After getting up I'd chug a breakfast drink and head for the showers. The farm

workers, mostly travellers accustomed to the road, were extremely appreciative of the camp having hot showers.

At 5:30am we would head over to the farm office where we got on a shuttle bus that drove us into a giant orchard. After a few minutes, all that could be seen were rows of cherries as far as the eye could see. It doesn't take long to figure out how to pick cherries. The main thing you have to watch for is to avoid pulling the stem out. The hard part is figuring out how to pick fast.

With a big box strapped to our stomachs we'd pick until it was full, mark the box, and set it down to be picked up by an ATV. Every time we picked a box we made \$12. The boxes gathered by an ATV would be brought to the warehouse where they would be sorted based on quality. We were told that a lot of the cherries would be exported to Asia where they fetch a high price.

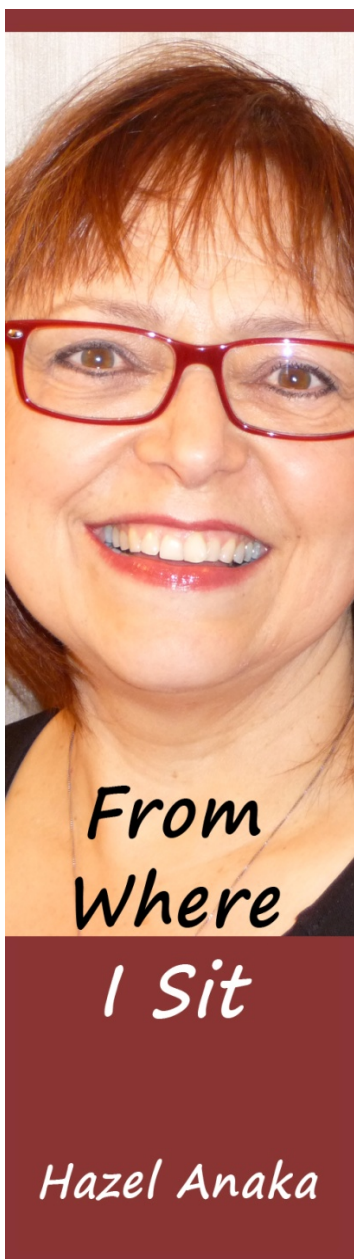
The hardest part about picking cherries is the heat. It didn't take long after the sun came up to reach 20C. Instead of picking until a certain time we'd pick until the temperature rose to about 30C (usually not long after noon). At that point we were exhausted and sweating buckets. The first day we worked about 6 hours and I picked 8 boxes of cherries. That worked out to around \$15 an hour. While Australians usually get paid about \$18/hour for physical labour, \$15/hour isn't bad by Canadian standards.

As the season progressed many of workers would start picking faster. Not surprisingly, Matt was one of the fastest. By the end of the season he was averaging over \$30/hour. Not bad at all, especially considering the first \$18,200 you make on your working holiday is 100% tax free!

The camp rules stated that we couldn't drink on site, but when Matt showed up with a 24 pack of XXXX (a popular Australian beer) not a single one of our neighbours turned down the offer. We sat in a circle and each person shared the adventure they'd taken to get there. Some, like myself, had just arrived in Australia, while others had been there over a year and done all kinds of odd jobs.

Around 8:00pm people started heading back to their tents. We all wanted to stay up drinking, but we knew we'd soon be woken by the Kookaburra's laugh.





## Hasn't Stuck

Sometimes when we push the limits, circumstances snap us back. Sometimes when we think we're invincible, we get flattened. Sometimes when we misalign our priorities, we're forced to regroup.

Those setbacks can be anything from job loss to personal disappointments to health problems. They all serve to put us back on our heels and screw with our well-laid plans. They throw us off our schedule for the day, week, or even lifetime.

If we're awake, they also teach us something about life and ourselves.

If we're smart, we get 'it' the first time.

For about three weeks now I've been fighting a head cold that Roy gave me after he'd had it for about two weeks. At its worst I suffered a severe headache, congestion, and ironically, a runny nose. Throw in some phlegm, fatigue, and a cough for good measure. Because most of us can't (or won't) take to our sick beds, I tried powering through because, you see, I'm very busy doing important, time-sensitive work. Oh, sure, I snuck in a couple naps and felt momentarily better but overall it lasted way too long for my liking (and is still not totally gone). Not that I was alone in that. There's a 'thing going around' that lingers for weeks.

Then, Saturday, the day after a therapeutic massage, as I was walking to the house after performing a marriage, I fell. I stepped lengthwise on a garden hose, twisted my left ankle, and landed heavily on my right knee. It's not my first fall. Like most people, I was stunned. Couldn't believe it happened and stopped to assess the damage. I knew my knee was hurt but couldn't believe my silky dress pants were totally untouched. The road rash covers about three square inches and hurts like hell.

I tweeted a picture to Grady who, at five, is quite familiar with this injury. When he called his first words were 'move the hose' and then announced that my aloe vera plant is 'a small miracle at healing.'

So I spent Mother's Day thanking God I didn't tear my Achilles' tendon (or break a wrist) and limping around gingerly with my wrenched back and wrecked knee. I was in bed when others were in church and dinner.

But the pain was not limited to my lower body. On Friday I paid a dermatologist good money to do something called electrofulguration to five raised spots on my face. My bangs and the side arms of my glasses don't cover the areas. Between the shiny antibacterial ointment, the slight swelling from the freezing injection sites, and the red dots themselves that need to scab over in the coming days I'm a bit of a mess. I feel beat up and battered, but God knows I've recovered from much worse. So I don't expect to succumb to my injuries.

But, yet again, I've been forced to slow down and stop. To ponder whether it was inattention or a karmic joke. To take the time to rest, refresh, shut down, leave the work alone, to put me first for a change. I'm not sure why this lesson hasn't stuck, from where I sit.

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





Dear  
Barb

Barbara Godin

## Taking a Gamble

Dear Barb:

*I will be graduating college shortly with an engineering degree and I have already received a job offer, which I accepted. The problem is that I have received a second job offer and the pay is better than the job I already accepted. I am not sure what to do. The job that I accepted is a great place to work and they have gone out of their way to make me feel comfortable, as I have already been working part-time while finishing school. The job offer from the other factory includes substantially better wages, but there is not as much room for progress. I am not sure if I should accept the better offer to get the experience and then leave in a few years, or stay where I'm at since there is plenty of room for progress here. I am so confused! Dan*

Hi Dan:

Good for you, two job offers! As you know the decision is ultimately up to you. However since you have accepted a job offer and are already working there, you may want to consider whether you want to burn that bridge. You said there is room for advancement at your present position, however if you accept the other offer and leave they may not be receptive to you returning at a later date. My advice is to stay where you are, as you most likely will excel beyond where you would at the other position due to the limited growth potential. Good luck, Dan and thanks for writing.

Dear Barb:

*My wife and I have been married five years. We occasionally go to casinos but gambling has never become a problem until recently. My wife signed up for online gambling and she is gambling hundreds of dollars a week.*

*She did not tell me about this and I only discovered it when I saw it on our credit card statement. My wife usually takes care of the bills so I don't see our credit card statements, but when I noticed a large payment to our Visa card I went online and saw the statement. I was shocked! I confronted my wife and she was kind of sheepish and said she thought it would be fun. Apparently she didn't realize how difficult it would be to stop the automatic payments from coming off the credit card. She says she is trying to get hold of the person in charge to stop the payments. I checked through previous statements and realized she has been doing this for at least six months. I am wondering if she may have a problem and if I should get her into some sort of group or something, as we really can't afford this to go on much longer. Thanks, Ben*

Hi Ben:

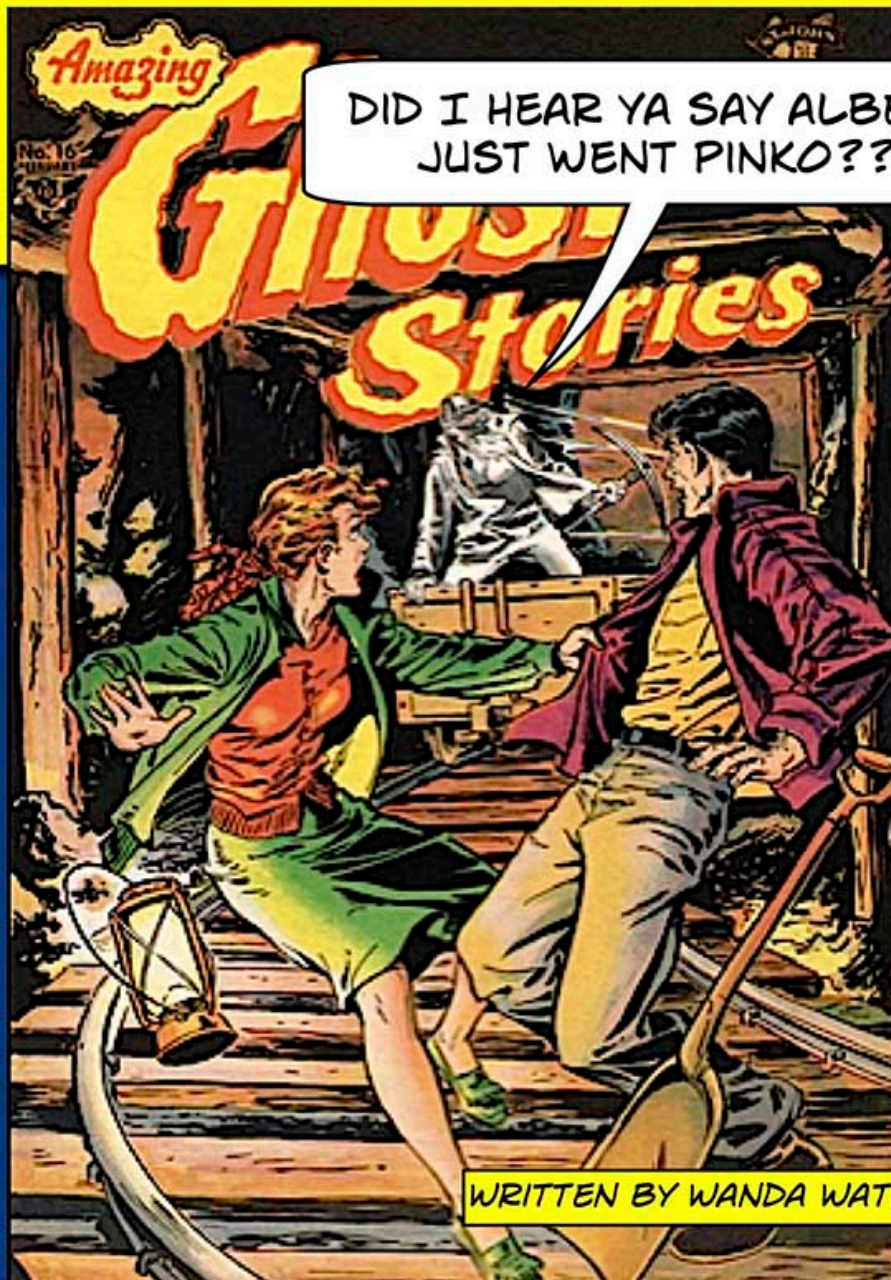
I think the scenario you are describing is all too common with the proliferation of casinos in every community and online. It does sound like your wife has a problem as she has been hiding her gambling from you, so she obviously knows she is out of control. She may have every intention of stopping, but as with all addictions, it's not that easy. It would be a good idea to contact the Gamblers Anonymous chapter in your area and they will be able to direct you to the appropriate facilities, whether it is a support group, a 12 step program or individual counselling. Thanks for your question Ben.

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.

# Weird Canada

## CANADA'S RICHEST, MOST CONSERVATIVE PROVINCE NOW HAS A SOCIALIST GOVERNMENT

The New Democratic Party (NDP), lead by Rachel Notley, won by a healthy majority in the very province they'd once referred to as "the belly of the beast" because of its longstanding hostility to socialism.



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.

## Attending an AUSU Meeting

AUSU general council meetings are typically held the 2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday of each month at 5:30 MST. Meeting details can always be found in The Voice, or at [www.ausu.org](http://www.ausu.org). AUSU will be holding this year's Annual General Meeting on Wed May 27, 2015 at 5:30pm MST.

The AGM is a great opportunity to attend an AUSU council meeting, take part in discussions, and vote on agenda items. The AUSU Annual Report is also presented at the AGM which reviews some of the projects that AUSU Council has completed over the past year and provides financial information for the last fiscal year.

All members are welcome to attend and take part in all public meetings. To receive call in information, agendas and other documents, please contact our office by email [ausu@ausu.org](mailto:ausu@ausu.org), by phone 1-855-497-7003, or through the chat feature on our website [www.ausu.org](http://www.ausu.org).

## Great AU Finds Online

### In the job market?

AUSU has put together a great list of tools to help our members be successful in their search for the perfect job! Whether you are searching for a part time job this summer or a lifelong, fulfilling career; we've got you covered! Check out our Career Links page at: <http://www.ausu.org/services/career.php>

## IMPORTANT DATES

- May 27: AUSU Annual General Meeting
- June 10: Deadline to register for courses starting July 1
- June 10: AUSU Council Meeting
- June 11 – 13: Convocation at AU! Congratulations!
- June 30 – Deadline to register in courses starting Aug 1

## Win AWESOME prizes!

We want to give you 1 of 5 amazing AUSU Prize Packs!! Enter to win after completing our short survey about the AUSU services that affect YOU!

The survey is quick and painless –  
and we need your input!

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/AUSUTVM>



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**Am I Eligible?**  
Students become eligible once they have reached their second course (or 6 credits) in a year. Coverage will start on the 1<sup>st</sup> of the month following your enrolment if you register before the 10<sup>th</sup> of the month.  
If you register later in the month, coverage will start the 1<sup>st</sup> of the second month.  
If you opt out of the plan it will not be offered again for 11 months, should you continue to qualify.

Note: Students must reside in Canada and be under the age of 70 to be eligible.

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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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Wanda Waterman, Barb Godin, Christina Frey,  
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