

THE VOICE

MAGAZINE

Vol 23 Issue 24 2015-06-12

Meeting the Minds

Interviewing Dr. "Vive" Kumar, Part II

Photo Feature

Around AU At Convocation

Dismantling the Forums

Are they Needed?

Plus:

Can You Miss What You Never Had?

*We'll Show You Where the Monsters Are
and much more!*



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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR



We love to hear from you! Send your questions and comments to voice@voicemagazine.org, and please indicate if we may publish your letter.

EDITORIAL

Convocation!

Karl Low



First, congratulations to all those who have graduated over the past year. The last couple of days have seen a number of you up in Athabasca, Alberta participating in AU's formal graduation ceremony, and with one more day of ceremonies to go, this is actually a great time for newer students to see what is hopefully in store for them in the future. If you're reading this before Saturday afternoon, you should really consider taking a few moments to check out the live-streaming [webcast](#) of the ceremonies.

What you won't see in the webcast, however, is just how pretty the grounds and area of Athabasca University is. I've been up to Athabasca once, myself, however, that was in the middle of winter where the -40 degree weather (and that was without factoring in the wind-chill) made looking at anything aside from the quickest path to get indoors very difficult. Fortunately, Bethany Tynes has given us a photo feature so that we can all get an idea of what our university looks like.

One of the many things that tie the students and alumni of traditional universities together is that they all hold some of the same experiences and knowledge of their campus and environs. Things like Mac Hall, the Hub, The Bob, The Maddy hold meaning to students from certain campuses (U of C, U of A, and Victoria College, and U of T respectively) But at AU, we don't have that. So these few shared experiences we do get, convocation, exam centres, are all the more precious, and even they only connect a very few of us. If the experience of a post-secondary education is supposed to be collegial (which has the same roots as the word "college" for a reason) then it seems a shame that AU has put so little into developing collegial experiences for students to share.

Of course, in fairness, before widespread adoption of the internet and newer and faster technologies, these opportunities would have been extremely difficult. But that was then. This is now. Creating those experiences is easier than ever, but with the recent reports underlining the difficulty of AU remaining sustainable for the next several years, the appetite for doing things which would have no obvious cost-benefit is probably at a minimum. Still, I think AU could consider it. Their infrastructure is already organized around providing information at a distance, why not host various lectures, debates, forums, maybe even concerts, or other such events and offer them to AU students for a modest fee? It might work to enhance both revenue and student collegiality. It would also allow AU to carve out a niche that might attract more students.

Aside from that, this week, both Barb Lehtiniemi and Deanna Roney look at the services provided by AUSU. Barb examines a service that may soon cease to be, while Deanna asks about a service that AUSU used to provide but no longer does. Tying that all together is this month's Council Connection. Written this week by our own S.D. Livingston.

We also have the second part of Marie Well's feature interview with Dr. "Vive" Kumar, plus advice, reviews, and informative articles means that this issue of *The Voice Magazine* should have something for everyone. Enjoy the read!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Karl', with a stylized flourish at the end.

MEETING THE MINDS

INTERVIEWS with AU's EDUCATORS



The Voice Magazine *previously interviewed Dr. Kumar in April of 2014. That interview looked more at his background, while this time, Marie Well interviews him about some of this theories and accomplishments. Read the first part of this interview in the May 29th edition of The Voice Magazine*

Marie: How do you aim to stimulate student motivation in online learning environments?

Dr. Kumar: I think I partially answered that. Convincing students that they are pioneers in this next generation of learning is a major stimulus for student motivation. Studying in an online university is much harder than studying in a traditional university because of the level of commitment, the need for concentration, the ability to self-regulate, and the capacity to execute initiatives expected of students. The skillsets gained by students and the confidence with which they can apply these skillsets are keys not only to the success of our students but also to AU's reputation. We need to make students believe that they are pioneers that the rest of the world is going to follow. Students should remember that the blended and supplemental online instruction

now offered at traditional universities have been adopted, nurtured, and promoted by Athabasca University decades ahead of time. We strive to be in the forefront of things when it comes to learning innovation and students should feel that they are not only part of this innovation but also drive the innovation.

There are innovative techniques that would help students showcase their successes and challenges. Suppose a student has completed one year of study at Athabasca University. The student can get a good transcript to show for that effort. How about offering students an electronic profile that is automatically generated, capturing every experience the student has had over that year? This study experience would include measurable indicators such as the ability of the student to assist peers in subject matters, the conceptual excellence of the student, the study challenges faced by the student, the tenacity of the student in facing those challenges, gaps in skills of the student, the growth of different competencies in various subject areas, and the translations of these skillsets into outcomes expected by targeted markets, where students seek jobs or business opportunities or other intellectual pursuits, all captured, categorized, and measured over the last 365 days. That would be a wonderful motivator to make AU students stand out. Imagine publishing, preferably anonymously, these kind of profiles of all our students, on a weekly or even a daily basis. That is the kind of opportunity and advancement we are looking to provide to our students, as part of the AU experience. With Analytics.

That is what is now possible with our research efforts in analytics that we are currently testing in pilot projects, hoping to bring it to reality shortly. It offers students not just a transcript, not just their grades, of course they are important, but also how exactly they achieved those grades, with study pathways and evidences of excellence backing the grades. How is that for motivation? Our students should feel the excitement with initiatives such as this one to be proud of being at Athabasca University and studying online. They certainly are the primary drivers behind such innovations.

Online learning implies access to knowledge through instructional modes that accommodate student's pace, capacity, and aspirations. We could easily supplement online material with contemporary expert instruction and interaction. We should be able to tap into expertise and bring it to our students whenever and wherever they are available as multiple streams of instruction that students can choose from. That is the level of engagement opportunities we can offer our students, as yet another stimulus of motivation.

Our students should feel that they are creating knowledge as they study. That is the prime reason of being in a university – knowledge creation. This is something I really, really want to push. Knowledge creation transcends the location of study. Educational institutions simply offer environments for knowledge creation. Students, instructors, and administrators, we all need to see that, as a university, our mandate is to support students and help them become an integral part of the knowledge creation process. Getting this message out is another key driver for student motivation.

Marie: What is your approach to providing feedback for students to help them with their learning objectives?

Dr. Kumar: Feedback typically is aimed at helping students to understand things. As a precursor, students should be able to approach the instructor without any hesitation. I tend to be open with students, make them feel welcome to contact me as they see fit, through any of the means available, at any time. Students should feel that this person is actually valuable to have a conversation with. It comes back to relationship establishment. By being open and by being approachable, we are building a healthy channel for our students to feel good about contacting instructors. The quality of feedback could vary from person to person, based mostly on the pedagogical philosophies of the instructor.

Personally, I tend to match the context of my feedback to the feedback expectations of students. This approach has worked well for me till now. In fact, this closely relates to one of the research questions of my doctoral dissertation.

Marie: What do you purport to be the role of technology and multimedia in online environments? How do they aid or complicate online learning?

Dr. Kumar: More important than teaching students about concepts is our ability to guide students to learn the concepts, effectively, to a deeper extent. In other words, how to teach students to enable them to study effectively themselves, and how to measure their study efforts regularly? This is what we can do in a technology-savvy multiple-media online environment.

I can always go in front of the students and give a three-hour lecture. Then, I can give them another one-hour lecture to tell them how to understand and effectively study the material covered in that 3-hour lecture. This additional instruction is typically not present in traditional instruction, and that is what we can comfortably include in an online environment with technology and media. Further, with technology and media, we can customize the regular and additional instruction to the needs of individual students.

I am not talking about babysitting or spoon-feeding our students. I am talking about scaffolding our students so that they can build themselves to exceed their own expectations and the expectations of the university. I can help my students feel like an integral component of knowledge creation, in a technology infused world, where they take ownership of the knowledge they create. Technology is now an integral part of human life. About twenty-five years ago, we were still questioning the need for technology in social life. Now that the technology is here to stay, we strive to customize technology to optimize the benefits. I think that's what we are preparing out students for, to make sense and groom technology and media.

Media typically combines the information being conveyed and the channel that carries the information. How exactly does the intertwining of information with the channel benefit our students? Is the channel good enough for the type of information it carries? Is the information valuable enough to share across multiple channels? Is it possible to feel the emotion expressed in the channel? The possibilities are endless.

How exactly to customize the media to get a higher level of enthusiastic interaction? It is not just a technology problem. It is a human problem. We need to do more research in customizing media to get the meaning of what is being conveyed and how well it is conveyed. It is a good research challenge for us. Imagine a study session where we collect recordings of your facial expression, your body movements, your contemplation of the problem, your communication with friends and the study group, and so on. One of my research assistants is looking for ways to integrate these pieces of information to build a model of what we call a sentimental mental makeup. The mental makeup will allow us, for instance, to understand and explain the negative student experiences or positive student insights. Another research assistant is looking to accurately measure and causally associate ADHD affliction. Technology allows us to support students who need different kinds of media to learn effectively. Gioia is yet another research project that targets conversational analytics, to understand and measure the social distance between people engaged in conversations. <http://LearningAnalytics.ca> highlights some of our learning analytics projects.

Student Sizzle AU's Hot Social Media Topics

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



With summer upon us, student activity has slowed down, but here's what's been on the minds of those at AU.

AthaU Facebook Group

Marc posts information on how to easily extend the length of an essay. Janine seeks guidance on planning for her BFA. Lesley wonders why courses are so expensive when they don't come with a real book. Deanne seeks advice on balancing studies with work and family.

Other posts include AU convocation, tutor communication, ordering transcripts, AUSU staffing issues, and courses ACCT 253, CMNS 401, EDUC 406, MATH 215, PHIL 333, PSYC 290, and WGST 266.

Twitter

@AthabascaU tweets on June 10: "Final preparations are underway in Athabasca! Tomorrow we welcome our 2015 graduates. Follow and use the hashtag #AUGrad15." In an earlier tweet, @AthabascaU posts: "Introducing your AU fellow graduates! Stay Tuned to #AUNews featuring their unique stories beg.Thurs. #AUGrad15 <http://ow.ly/O8IoN>."

Photo Feature

Bethany Tynes

Around AU at Convocation

AU covers convocation fairly extensively itself, including running a live stream of the ceremonies (you can watch the live stream of the ceremonies at <http://www.ustream.tv/channel/athabasca-university-convocation-2015> starting noon on Saturday, June 13th) So rather than cover that ground again, graduate Bethany Tynes took her camera to give us a tour of the campus and some of the things that happen outside of the ceremonies.



The Athabasca River flows through the town of Athabasca, giving grads a waterfront view as they drive into town



Banners in the town of Athabasca welcome grads to Convocation



The stone sign that was previously shaped like AU's old "nugget" logo has been updated with the university's new navy and orange colours and logo in the top left corner



The welcoming continues as grads the Regional Multiplex grounds, where Convocation takes place



The Athabasca Regional Multiplex sports an AU banner in honour of Convocation



AUSU Office Administrator Donette Kingyens and President Shawna Wasylyshyn pose proudly by a banner advertising The Voice Magazine while representing the students' union at Convocation



Sgt. Kevin McGillivray and piper Ted Stolys help lead the Convocation processional



Convocation always ends with Ted Soltys piping grads out of the ceremony - and posing for photos from innumerable grads and guests along with Sgt. McGillivray



AU's Academic Research Centre (still called "the new building" by AU faculty members, though it's been open for four years) is visible to grads from the Multiplex grounds



AU's environmentally-friendly Academic Research Centre building is filled with glass-walled offices housing staff from multiple faculties



The main campus is home to a large art collection, including not only paintings, but also large outdoor sculptures, like this one, titled "Bouquet"



Between the trees, AU's central building houses, among other things, the AU Library and science labs.



AU's Central Building is surrounded by tree-lined trails and fountains



Inside is the main reception desk, one that so few students ever see.



This is Governing Council Chambers, where the board of AU meets to make decisions about the future of the University.



Outside the Governing Council Chamber, the Central Building is filled with bright, cheery, decorative hangings.

Bethany Tynes completed her MA in Integrated Studies through AU, and is a Canadian politics junkie.

Can You Miss What You Never Had?

Deanna Roney



I have heard stories about course reviews, reviews that used to exist on the Athabasca University Student Union (AUSU) website. I have been a student at Athabasca University (AU) since 2012; I have only ever heard about these mythical reviews through whispers in dark corners of the forums.

What happened to these reviews? Anytime I have heard them discussed students have been adamant that they would love to have access to these. I had heard that the platform that was being used needed to be updated, and that was proving challenging due to the extent of information. It is my understanding, though, that these reviews disappeared a couple years before I became a student, and, while I am not technically minded, I cannot understand why it would take this many years to resolve the issue and have student course reviews back up and running. It is my understanding that "they" were working on it. This is

all information that I have heard in dribbles over the years. It leaves me wondering if these reviews are still being worked on, or if "they" have thrown their hands up and abandoned them altogether?

I know that at the end of every course I get sent a survey. I always take time and care when answering these surveys, hoping that my input may benefit future students. What happens to these surveys? Couldn't this information be used and presented to students who would like information on a course? Information such as workload, reading weight, and overall enjoyment?

Right now students have come together on Facebook, posting questions about courses and asking for student feedback. This process works well for popular courses. If you post a question about Women and Gender Studies course 333 (*Goddess Mythology*) you will become bombarded with opinions from students who have loved this course. If you post a question about a less popular course (less popular, at least, within the Facebook group) you may get a couple responses, or none. It is valuable for students to know how others have found the course, and the larger the pool of opinions, the better it is.

The course reviews would be an excellent source for students; especially if you are taking a course that not many have recently enrolled in. The reviews could have opinions from every student who has taken it and took the time to review it. This would give students a well-rounded opinion to make an informed discussion whether this course would fit into their current schedule, or if they would be better off waiting until things slow down before attempting it.

It's possible that it is a large undertaking— that it is being worked on, however, I have not seen it mentioned or talked about recently, and it does not appear to be on the minds of those currently at AUSU. Not according to the recent AGM package or Council meeting agendas that I have seen. I would like to ask AUSU to, if the reviews have fallen out of sight, to bring them back into focus. Consider the ways reviews would benefit all students.

Deanna Roney is an AU student who loves adventure in life and literature

Dismantling the AUSU Forum

Barbara Lehtiniemi



I remember my first lonely months as an AU student. Although I work well on my own, I know from experience that my learning process is enhanced by contact with fellow students. In my classroom of one, there is no enlightening discussion, no variety in points of view, no camaraderie.

When I discovered the [AUSU Discussion Forums](#), it was like discovering archaeological treasure. It took a lot of digging to find—I didn't know of their existence until I found them—but unearthing the forums was a revelation. Here were riches indeed: a place to ask questions,

learn about courses, and navigate the labyrinth of university procedures and policies.

Now it appears AUSU council is quietly planning to eliminate this benefit to students. Without notification to, or consultation with, students, AUSU is moving forward with plans to dismantle the AUSU Forums. Council has talked about website improvements at recent council meetings without revealing much detail. A document provided by AUSU last week revealed that, while some changes are progressive and long overdue (online scholarship applications, anyone?), others, like eliminating the discussion forums, seem to be a step backward. Since students indicate they want more engagement with other students, why reduce their opportunities?

If you haven't visited the AUSU Forums in a long time—or ever—you're not alone. Usage has been diminishing noticeably month by month. The lure of Facebook presents strong competition for students' online attention. But, while connecting with other students on the [AthU Facebook page](#) is convenient, the AUSU Forums have distinct advantages that mainstream social media can't match. Here are two big ones:

Searchability. Every comment posted on the AUSU Forums is searchable. If you want to know if anyone has discussed, for example, course extensions, how to claim invigilation fees on your income tax, or a particular course, you can search for it. It doesn't matter if the discussion happened last week or last year, the information is readily available. On Facebook, search results are limited to what is loaded on your screen; if you want to find threads older than a few hours, you'll have to scroll, scroll, scroll. The same questions end up getting asked week after week, with varying quality of answers.

Privacy. The AUSU Forums are restricted to AU undergraduate students. If you want to air a beef about your tutor, chances are you don't want your tutor to see it (at least until you've got all your marks back.) While it's possible for a tutor to also be an undergrad and therefore a member of AUSU, the AUSU Forums allow users to create their own user names, and restrict information displayed about themselves. With Facebook, students are letting it all hang out. Not only are they using, in most cases, their full name, they are posting for all of AU to see. The Facebook page is an informal—and unofficial—AU community, which includes students, alumni, staff, and faculty members. If the AUSU Forum is like asking a question in a student café, Facebook is like shouting it out in the middle of campus. (This is of particular concern to those who live in Alberta; do you really want to announce to a potential employer, "OMG, I totally flunked my EASY 101 exam. Can I withdraw from the course so it doesn't show on my transcript?")

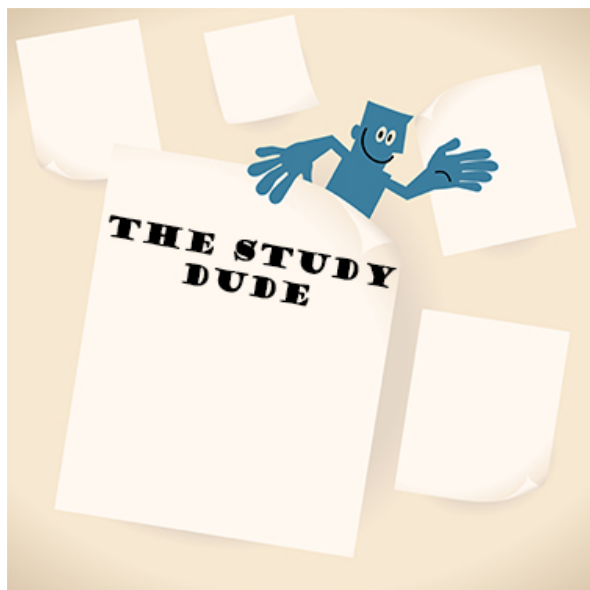
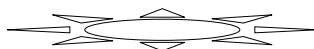
Since the AUSU Forums are superior, why aren't all AU undergraduate students using them? For the most part, they're not using the forums because not many *other* students are using them. A discussion forum is useful only to the extent that it is used. In order to have vibrant and informative discussions, in order to get timely and accurate responses to questions, more students have to use the forums more often.

How do you convince more students to use AUSU Forums? The same way you market any product or service: promote it. Despite the value of the discussion forums to its members, AUSU hasn't been particularly good at promoting this service. If students don't happen to see the brief mention of the forums that occasionally shows up in AUSU e-mail newsletters, they'll only find the forums if they happen, as I did, to dig in the right place. *The Voice Magazine* has done more than AUSU to promote the forums lately, with weekly highlights in the *Student Sizzle* column, and a feature article in 2014.

To avoid losing the AUSU Forums, you can start by using them. The more students who use them, the more students who *will* use them. Of course, usage is no guarantee of survival. Since AUSU council has stopped responding to posts in the "Ask AUSU" forum, their willingness to preserving this service for students appears doubtful.

If you're concerned about the loss of this or any other AUSU service, contact AUSU. E-mail ausu@ausu.org and request that your e-mail be forwarded to the remaining six AUSU student councillors. AUSU councillors won't know what you want unless you tell them.

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



Study Tips from a Semi-Anonymous Friend

The Right Time to Persuade

There is nothing more that The Study Dude wants for you than to wind up as leader of your next Athabasca University group project.

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 continues to examine the book *Thank you for Arguing* by Jay Heinrich. Brace yourself. This time, we conclude

your readership orbit around the art of manipulation, which has now sucked you, flailing arms and all, into the dark recesses of rhetoric.

A Time to Laugh. A Time to Cry. A Time to Persuade.

Timing can work in your favour. I once performed a dance routine at a creative academic conference where every dance movement was timed intricately to each beat of the music. (Yes, folks, dudes dance!) I polished

the routine to a shine and timed it so meticulously that multiple video recordings of the dance routine easily aligned in the editing process. If timing depended solely on practiced performance, I nailed it.

However, when it comes to telling a funny joke, my timing stumbles and jars. I'm better at receiving a joke than doling one out. My partner, on the other hand, sparks bellowing laughter in every room with a joke. My partner also knows exactly when to bring up an issue, and when to pose a solution, and when to change the topic, and when to make you smile. If timing depended solely on quick assessment, my partner's nailed it.

Timing doesn't just apply to jokes or movement, but also to how you handle group dynamics and work relationships. Jay Heinrich advises on how to manage timing in your day-to-day routine:

- *Kairos* means mastering timing to persuade. Timing involves perfecting the right moment to make the best impact.
- Prepare the optimal time, place, and people for your act of persuasion.
- When giving or attending a presentation, once the mood changes, the timing is ripe for persuasion. Jump on that moment to put your views forth.
- Try to speak last at a meeting or conference, as the last to speak gains a competitive advantage.
- If you want to propose some costly activity, propose it at the end of a financially successful year.
- If you attend a group meeting of some sort, once the discussion starts to die off, summarize the discussion in a way that benefits your point of view. Also, once the meeting nears its end point, bring up your perspectives as if you are reluctant to do so (which, of course, you are not reluctant to do in the slightest).
- Show lengthy movie trailers to increase your movie viewership. Post more of your book for free online to get more people to purchase the full version. Sell to people when they are hungry, as people buy more when the hunger pangs kick in.

Which Choice of Medium to Propose? To Inform?

Don't ever try to sing and instrumentally play a composition over the phone. Some people can sing and play an instrument through any medium and sound fabulous. A friend of mine went through no formal music training, but managed at a very young age to mimic vocals beautifully. This friend serenades with more passion than Celine Dion.

I, on other hand, had the misfortune—possessing no innate musical gift—of teaching myself how to play the piano, how to sing, and how to write songs. Needless to say, my cheap consumer synthesizer and poorly trained vocals didn't resonate well over the phone. One friend on the other end of the line denounced my music as harrowing. Yet, when I entered a recording studio, my vocals miraculously transformed. Perhaps the headphones tight to my ears and the microphone infused an otherwise amiss confidence. Listeners marvelled over the sound quality, too. "What happened to your voice?" they asked, to my delight and dismay. Needless to say, I favoured myself a song-writer versus a performer.

So, the secret is to choose your medium wisely. Jay Heinrich gives some great advice on how to select your medium, not for artistic expression, but for persuasion.

- Your medium for persuading others should depend on some strategic combination of ethos (values), pathos (emotions), and logos (logic).

- Different media evoke different emotions. Music evokes pathos (emotion); smell, pathos; sight, pathos; sight for written text, logos (as we sound the text in our heads); sound, logos; touch, pathos; taste, pathos; reading, logos.
- Shorter emails evoke ethos (values); longer emails evoke logos (logic), so shorten emails for subordinates and peers and make them longer for your line of bosses.
- Phone calls and conference calls evoke logos.

Cicero's Five Canons of Persuasion

I once wrote a creative piece on Plato's *Myth of Er*. I switched out Plato's Er and replaced him with Hitler in the story's afterlife scenario. Coming up with the plot for the script proved easy. The hard part involved timing the script precisely to a nine-minute piece of music. Each phrase needed to fit concisely in a series of beats or measures. I delivered the performance piece through a professionally recorded audio component (with my voice over) and added a PowerPoint artistic slideshow, timed precisely to the music.

If Cicero were alive today, he'd surely have been proud. I followed Cicero's five canons of persuasion in articulating an artistic speech that aimed to convey the principles of Plato's afterlife scenario as I saw fit for Hitler. (Hitler ends up choosing to be reborn as a Jewish person to repent for his sins, finalizing with rebirth as a Jewish person in the time of Hitler's own regime. It was a twisted story, but it relayed the gist of Plato's tale.)

Enough ado on Plato, now for Jay Heinrich's outline of Cicero's five canons of persuasion:

- Cicero's five canons entail (1) invention, (2) arrangement, (3) style, (4) memory, and (5) delivery.
- Invention has to do with creatively coming up with what you want to express. Make sure that you present both sides of an argument, starting with your opponent's and concluding with your own.
- Arrangement involves ordering your speech. Follow the order of introduction, narration (facts and figures), division (your and your opponent's points of view), proof (your examples), refutation (where you quash your opponent's views), and conclusion (where you should consider providing some pathos or emotion).
- Style means tweaking your speech for audience fit. Choose your words selectively to fit both the audience and occasion. Use vivid language, and consider using figures of speech to decorate your wording.
- Memory includes, traditionally, well, committing it to memory, or, conventionally, placing the speech on cue cards or in a PowerPoint as bullets. Imagine a house and fill it with wild imagery to tap into your memory palace.
- Delivery entails the actual presentation of the speech. Move closer to the audience to emphasize points. Vary your tone and speed of speech depending on the action and emotion of the content. If you want an instant confidence boost, speak loudly

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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Heinrich, Jay. (2013). *Thank You for Arguing: What Aristotle, Lincoln, and Homer Simpson Can Teach Us About the Art of Persuasion*. New York, NY: Three Rivers Press.

Council Connection

Public Council Meeting, June 8, 2015

S.D. Livingston



Have you ever heard that saying about the tip of an iceberg? That even though you can see part of a problem, there's likely to be a much bigger part of it lying unseen? As an AU student at this week's regular AUSU council meeting, I got that impression for a couple of reasons—and left wondering just how big some of those icebergs could turn out to be.

But let's start with the things that went well. The meeting moved along smoothly, with barely a ripple in the proceedings. Councillors and observers were there on time, the previous minutes were unanimously approved with one minor correction, and the current agenda was approved just as quickly.

Then it was on to a piece of pending business—a motion to accept updates to Policy 2.01 Conflict of Interest and Bias. Since council is waiting for more feedback from AU on changes to this policy, they voted unanimously to table it until the July meeting.

So far, so good. But that's when a couple of routine items began to appear much larger.

In the Action and Discussion Items, council ratified their decision not to hold a by-election to fill the three seats that are currently vacant. How big of a deal is that? Well, it means a much smaller (by 33 per cent) pool of opinions and experience for council to draw on—and for students to be represented by. It also means fewer voices on important votes. And having an equal number of both executives and councillors means one less check on executive power.

For this student at least, a full council with diverse voices and experience would be far preferable to one that's at the smallest possible size before an election must be triggered.

Next up was item 5.0, a vote to accept the project of redesigning the AUSU website at a cost of \$15,000. Would an updated, revamped website be nice, especially one that's mobile ready? You bet.

But one of the planned features for such an update is to eliminate all functionality that requires students to log in. And that could lead to all kinds of unexpected consequences.

For starters, the AUSU Forums would be eliminated. Not necessarily a bad thing in itself, since most of the student discussion has shifted to an AU Facebook group. But the forums (and their log-in feature) also serve key functions besides discussion posts. For example, at election time, the forums allow students to talk directly to candidates in one central location. All students can see the candidates' replies, and it's a benefit for candidates to answer a question once in the forums rather than a dozen times in individual emails.

If the forums are eliminated, that kind of debate and discussion could potentially move to the AU Facebook group. But that's not an official forum managed by AUSU, and any privacy concerns or other issues would fall under Facebook's policies, not AUSU's. That could turn out to be a big problem for students.

Also, on Facebook or other social media, questions and answers about the election would be on full display to all members of the group, including AU faculty and staff. I'm no expert on election rules or privacy, but I can't help wondering if that's the best place for it.

A lack of login function also raises questions about some new features that would be part of an upgraded site. These include online awards application forms and a return of the course evaluations. Without a login, will course evaluations and comments be available to the public? Will there be some kind of verification in place to ensure that only current students are posting evaluations? Also, will students need to type in all their information each time they fill out online forms, rather than simply logging in and having the system recognize them?

Hopefully council will get concrete answers to such questions, and ask for plenty of student suggestions and feedback, before signing off on a new website that could create as many problems as it solves.

Another issue of note came up during the Reports section of the meeting—and it's one that should definitely be on students' radar. It's the question of the student vote at the recent AGM that found three executive members (Jason Nixon, Shawna Wasylyshyn, and Corrina Green) had broken bylaws.

You can find a list of some of the broken bylaws in Barbara Lehtiniemi's *Voice* [article](#) on the AGM. As the article notes, "in most cases, the council members who spoke pled ignorance of the bylaws, or felt that their actions were justified in spite of the bylaws." However, in her president's report at the June 10 council meeting, Shawna Wasylyshyn explained that she didn't feel that she'd broken any bylaws.

And there sits the tip of the iceberg. On the one hand, she noted that AUSU's lawyer says they can continue as a council, and they're waiting for a formal legal opinion so they can publish it.

There sits the tip of the iceberg. On the one hand, ... AUSU's lawyer says they can continue as a council ... on the other hand, bylaws were clearly broken.

On the other hand, bylaws were clearly broken. Cancelling the original AGM, scheduled for April, is a major infraction on its own, and at the rescheduled AGM, President Wasylyshyn revealed that she'd been contacted by the Ministry of Innovation and Advanced Education due to complaints raised to them.

Wasylyshyn stated that Alberta Innovation had no concerns, but a bit later in the meeting, during the report by the Vice-President Finance, Corinna Green noted that there were no financial policies to look at this month, mainly because council are waiting on a legal ruling to see if they're still legally a council. This did not stop them from passing resolutions to spend almost \$25,000 plus taxes to a company to offer mental health services to students, or nearly \$20,000 to join an external lobby group, the Canadian Alliance of Student Associations.

So there the iceberg sits. How big it is I still can't tell, and I have no way to predict if we'll be voting for a new council soon. But I do know one thing. As AU students, we've all got a vested interest in watching it closely.

The next regular council meeting is currently scheduled for July 8th.

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.

In Conversation with No Dry Country, Part II

Wanda Waterman



*No Dry County is a Texan indie band with a sound that combines rootsy Americana, folk, and classic rock, brilliantly displayed in close harmonies and a lively stage presence. Their first full-length album, *The Night Before*, was just released this March. Recently the band's vocalist Trent Langford took the time to talk to Wanda Waterman about their name, their current activities, and the creative context of Lubbock, Texas.*

How did you come up with your band's name?

The short answer is that we didn't. All of our current lineup actually joined No Dry County (NDC), beginning with myself, in 2009. I had actually opened for NDC that year, and after losing their lead singer they invited me to join. The story goes that when the band got together, Lubbock was voting on a proposition to make the county wet. Advertisements were around town reading "No Dry County" and, likely as a joke, the band used that name for their first show.

What influence has Lubbock, or Texas in general, had on the development of your sound?

Around here, Bob Will's is king, of course. He was innovative in the way he combined music from different cultures and was one of the first people to use electric guitars and amplified instruments to keep the old dance halls swingin.' Buddy Holly inspired the Beatles, and the Flatlanders jammed with The Clash.

Every day we're greeted by an endless open horizon. The wind blows through countless numbers of wind chimes hanging on grandmothers' porches and the songs and drums of the Comanche echo in the canyons of the Palo Duro. The paintings of Georgia O'Keefe were forever changed when she witnessed our sunsets.

Explosions in the Sky gave us the first glimpse of a literal musical translation of our landscape. Combining those elements with the storytelling of the Outlaw movement, 80's and 90's country harmonies, and infectious choruses, gets us somewhere close.

But, being from the panhandle, we sort of have an obligation to not be tied down by any one genre, and the mixture of any and everything, including the minimal space-driven beats of modern hip hop, make their way in here and there.

If your band's life was a movie, what kinds of scenes would fill it?

Most of our time as a band is spent on the road just figuring out how to survive, in a sense. Scenes from the film *Into The Wild* come to mind, as we've spent the majority of our twenties living what most would call an "alternative lifestyle"— sleeping on couches and playing for tips while most of our contemporaries mortgaged houses and started careers.

We constantly meet a variety of people from different backgrounds, many who have become close friends. The whole thing is really a gamble of sorts and the endgame may not always be clear, but the experience itself in many ways makes the decision worthwhile.

What conditions do you require in your life in order to go on being creative? What do you feed your muse? Are there any books, films, or albums that have deeply influenced your development as an artist?

It's important for me to retire from the daily grind at times to kick-start the creative process. I deal with a lot of the day-to-day business of keeping a band moving, and it can be easy to begin spending more time promoting the art than with the art itself.

I recently read *Walk On*, which details the spiritual journey of the band U2. Books like that allow me to keep growing intellectually and can help to keep the music from becoming stagnant. We're also trying to get away as a band more, aside from playing shows, to clear our heads and see what we can come up with creatively outside of our normal environment.

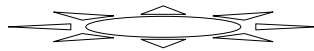
If you had an artistic mission statement, what would it be?

"Make good music. Play it for anyone with a desire to listen."

Tell us about your current and upcoming projects.

We're just wrapping up about 13 weeks of CD release shows in support of *The Night Before* and will take off much of June around my wedding on the 20th. This fall we are making an east coast run and hopefully will start making plans to get back in the studio in some form or fashion during the early part of 2016.

Wanda also writes the blog *The Mindful Bard*: [*The Care and Feeding of the Creative Self*](#).



The Mindful Bard
Currency of Man

Wanda Waterman

The Psalmist is a Trauma Survivor

MELODY GARDOT
CURRENCY of MAN



Album: *Currency of Man*

Artist: Melody Gardot

"'Cause I believe in a world where we all belong,
And I'm so tired o' seein' every good man gone."
- Melodie Gardot, "Preacher Man"

The above quote is from a song that memorialises the brutal racist killing of 14-year-old Emmett Till in Mississippi in 1955. This is the track that sits at the zenith of the story arc comprising this series of original (Gardot) songs, a story arc that starts off with a compassionate soul's expressions of anger and grief at injustice and ends with— well, something quite different.

The album's title is a case in point. In Melodie's own

words: "This album is about our worth in this world, and how everyone, no matter their status, or origins, or color of their skin, holds a purpose."

Currency of Man is like an Old Testament psalm; it begins with despair, angst, and dire predictions and ends with deep affirmations of love and unconditional personal worth. One of the divinely uplifting songs toward the end of the album is "Once I Was Loved," its music as deeply comforting as its words:

I still surrender troubles I know.

No use pretending that troubles ain't my home.

But I am certain that what is enough is just to remember that once, once I was loved.

Philadelphia's Melodie Gardot was leading a relatively mediocre life as a fashion student until one day she was cycling and was hit by a car. Recovering from the head injuries and multiple fractures required a lengthy hospital stay. It was there, in the hospital, that Gardot became a songwriter; the music healed her at the same time as the accident provided the circumstances, however painful, for discovering and exercising her deepest gifts.

She chooses a subdued rhythm-and-blues vocal delivery but that's really neither here nor there; her very authentic and mindful emotion is far more salient than her style.

In addition to the high quality of the basic package, a lot of creativity went into the arrangement and production of these songs. There's a wonderfully retro sound that's a mishmash of sixties film scores, soul, funk, gospel, and psychedelia, a little like Grace Slick with a Tom Waits aesthetic.

Kudos to both Gardot and famed producer, Larry Klein, for pulling off another masterpiece, but a large share of the credit should go to French sound engineer, Maxime LeGuil, an expert in vintage recording equipment and techniques, for being so open to experimenting with Gardot's ideas about the impact of music on emotion.

Gardot has created a kind of catharsis, a going deep into despair in order to find light, which is often a necessary step on the path to spiritual high ground. Listening to *Currency of Man* is like a journey into pain and back out again: at first it hurts bad, then not so much, then a poignancy enters, and then, slowly, comes the ascension to a joy so much sweeter than what would have been had you never suffered.

Currency of Man manifests seven of the Mindful Bard's criteria for music well worth a listen.

- It's authentic, original, and delightful.
- 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'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 renews my enthusiasm for positive social action.
- It makes me appreciate that life is a complex and rare phenomena, making living a unique opportunity.

Wanda also writes the blog *The Mindful Bard: The Care and Feeding of the Creative Self*.

Music Review

We'll Show You Where the Monsters Are

Samantha Stevens



Album: *We'll Show You Where the Monsters Are*

Band: Fable Cry

To follow the review that I had done on their singles from this album back in [April](#), I am excited to review Fable Cry's album *We'll Show You Where The Monsters Are*. Full of the same goodness, fun, and eccentricity that we sampled in their singles, *We'll Show You Where The Monsters Are* brings the monsters from your childhood stories and nightmares to life.

The album is arranged in a grand theatrical fashion, full of stories and wonder slowly pulling you further and further down the rabbit hole. Be prepared to be faced with ghosts, zombies, witches, fortunetellers, deadly journeys, hungry wolves, claustrophobic tombs, and anything else that may frighten you.

I absolutely love this album and I don't think I could say enough about it. The first song "Dead or Alive (For Now)" prepares you for the magnificent journey that you are about to embark on. Feeling like the prickling of the hair on the back of your neck as you watch the sun blink out of existence on Halloween night, the lyrics in this song build that nervous apprehension that starts at your toes and ends at the very tips of your hair. Prepared for anything, you step out into the dark.

"Fancy Dancing" is the following track. This was one of the tracks that I reviewed back in April, so a quick recap...dwindling courage, an encounter with a witch, a dreadful realization, and all accompanied with brilliantly composed gypsy-like music. Ready for the next step of the journey?

The high seas await you in "From Myth to Moon" (available in both in a clean and explicit version). The music is very much like the typical pirate music, but it feels as though there is an uneasiness lying behind the overly giddy violin. Sure enough, upon listening closely to the lyrics you discover the singer is warning you of the darkness that resides in the deepest reaches of the human heart.

Ever wonder what Dr. Frankenstein was thinking as he build his monster? "The Good Doctor", also available in clean and explicit, creates such a vivid mental image you feel as though you are there in the very laboratory where the monster is being created. Perhaps the best thing I love about this song is the lyrics, especially the part "...to the cacophony of coffin-covered corpses..." which is such a wonderful example of alliteration. For

anyone studying any form of English and literature, you will find yourself swooning over the ingeniousness of the lyrics.

"Onion Grin" is the next track, which was the other single that was reviewed in April, and I still absolutely love this song. What could be better than a song from the perspective of the villainous wolf found in so many fables.

"Set Me Loose" is unnerving, but fantastic at the same time. I feel that the song is about Dracula or some other similar vampire character calling to his beloved. Although the track starts out somewhat claustrophobic with the character describing his surroundings in detail, the character is true to the vampires of old, which is something I feel the vampire genre needs.

The final track that I will mention is "Slow Down". The blues sound is fantastic, and the lyrics are extremely entertaining. Going along with the general theme of the album, I imagine that this song is from the perspective of a zombie imploring to his victim to slow down as he chases him.

Three songs remain on the album that are as superb as the others, but I'll leave these for you to discover on your own...that is, if you are prepared to venture into the world created by Fable Cry. Keep your wits about you!

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



The Fit Student

Learning the Art of War, Navy SEAL Style

Marie Well



What student wouldn't love to bask in the Navy SEAL mindset during exam time? If you don't idealize parachuting out of planes into frigid, turbulent waters or sentencing yourself to Hell Week, at least you can take comfort that the Navy SEAL mindset also applies to everyday things, such as studies and work.

What have I learned about life's challenges? From my experiences, combative arts, such as martial arts, serves as a prime example of how to roll with the punches of life. Believe it or not, as a martial arts student, after getting kicked in the stomach hundreds of times, I started to, oddly, enjoy the impact. Yet, missing too many martial arts classes can make a simple punch to the face completely rock my world. That's part of the importance of persistence. The more you learn to take hits and the more you stick with the training regime, the more you grow. That's life.

But what can a Navy SEAL teach on how to face life's obstacles? Apparently, volumes. Many books get published by SEALs on human excellence, on high performance, and even on business or life. Rob Roy, a longstanding Navy SEAL, crafted the book *The Navy SEAL Art of War* to highlight lessons on facing

life's challenges headlong. Without further ado, let's explore his practical wisdom, a wisdom referred to in some circles as "phronesis".

Defy All Limitations

Do you often find yourself saying, I will do one more item on my list and then quit? I do. I often transcribe audio clips for an hour some days, or for eight minutes of audio, whichever comes first. I plan on reading fifteen pages of a technical book each day, stopping once I reach twenty pages. I even read two pages of the dictionary every night, without fail.

Rob Roy takes this mindset further, arguing that one should never impose a limit. He advises to tell yourself to do "at least" an amount rather than to target a specific amount. He advises on not counting reps during a workout, but going to failure. He even advises to make your sales goals start with a minimum amount rather than, once again, a target amount. That's how you defy limitations in your thinking.

Interestingly, I've learned that the more you rethink things, the more ingrained in your psyche the new way of thinking becomes. By making a tiny shift in thinking away from limitations the opportunity for growth and expansion arises. Want to make a higher grade? Use your ideal grade as the minimum, and step it up from there.

"Embrace the Suck"

You face an exam you prepared poorly for. Your hands tremble. Your body sweats, and the deadline looms for you to seat yourself in the examination room. The scenario clearly sucks. So, how do you go about embracing the suck?

Rob Roy suggests you incorporate as much humour as possible—and a big smile. Instead of angst and anxiety, find yourself giggling over the scenario, making light of it, smiling at your circumstances. Of course, ill preparation for an exam should be avoided at all costs, but when it does happen, take it with a smile and as much humour as you can muster. The greatest of leaders use humour to their advantage, as people respond favourably to a leader who doesn't panic at the first sign of defeat.

Passion Leads to Monumental Change

At my prior position, I lacked passion. I begrudged the daily grind, although I frequently read books on how to find happiness at work. My passions for entrepreneurial or creative initiatives suffered, and I longed to alter my life's course. However, a time came when my contract finalized and I could explore what truly excited me.

Now, I aspire to tap into my passions on a daily basis, scouting out what truly engages me, what truly provides meaning.

Rob Roy implores you to find passion in your life—to him passion is contagious. If a leader exudes passion on some action, the staff will more readily follow suit. Passion makes activity collaborative and cooperative, infused with excitement, rather than merely working the grind for someone else's pursuit.

Roy says that to find passion you need to love challenging yourself; you must find meaning in your identity and your actions; you should surround yourself with favourable people; you need to love what inspires others before you include them in your inner circle; you would benefit from standing behind people's passions outside of work.

Engage the Vision

Developing a vision vitalizes life's meaning. I envision serving my loved ones and serving God to the fullest. I also hope to build ecommerce businesses. Originally, I intended to say that I also hope to dabble in ecommerce businesses, but that would defeat the point of creating a vision that counts. Roy implores you to make your vision grandiose—a vision you can sink your teeth into.

Roy also advises to put your vision to writing. Yes, get it down on paper, as writing increases the likelihood of realizing the goal. He encourages you to announce your vision to a wide audience—to the world, in fact—as this creates a greater climate of accountability to that goal.

So, if your goal is to graduate with honours, why not step it up to graduating with honours and applying for graduate studies. If your goal is to pass, move it on up to a goal of getting straight A's, and then devour books on how to write academically and how to memorize most anything.

Treat Yourself with Care

I love exercise. I just don't do it. Exercising seems to bring out the bear in me. I once could bench press 110 pounds (with absolutely no steroids), however, which is exceptional for a small-framed woman. Yet, I find many other ways to treat myself with care, mostly from spending time relaxing with a good nonfiction book and eating lots of spinach, berries, and nuts.

Rob Roy suggests we spend thirty minutes three or four days a week engaged in physical exercise. Exercise reduces the risk of depression and increases creativity, confidence, and focus. Roy's view involves pushing yourself to perform at higher levels than those around you. By engaging in fitness regularly, we create even greater opportunities for staying healthy.

If you want to release stress from an exam, visit a gym, push and pull weights, cycle, run, you name it. The worries wash away with each repetition, leaving you refreshed by the end of the workout. So keep your mind and body fit to discover your apogee in academic performance.

Click of the Wrist

Small Spaces, Big Yield

How does your garden grow—or does it? If the approaching summer weather is making you yearn for a bigger backyard or even a small square of earth to plant vegetables or herbs, there's good news: now more than ever, gardening doesn't require large spaces or even a backyard at all. This week's links show you how to get a great crop this year, even if all you've got is a balcony or windowsill.

For Newbies

If you want to try your hand at container gardening but aren't sure where to begin, Toronto Green Community's tip sheet is a good place to start. It covers the basics, including planting, soil, what to plant, when to plant, and more.

Water and Sunshine

No soil? No space? No problem. This Lifehacker article shows you how to grow lettuce, scallions, fennel, and carrot greens, using nothing more than a bowl of water sitting on your windowsill. Even better: if you do it right, the plants will continue growing and yielding week after week!

Reuse, Reuse, Reuse

When gardening in small spaces, there's no need to go out and buy expensive equipment; hanging shoe racks easily become planters, and old pallets serve as space-saving plant walls. This photo blog links to 40 fantastic ways to repurpose old things into beautiful, vibrant gardens.



The Travelling Student The Beaches Not Seen

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 I made my way back to Sydney by train.

A few days had passed since I arrived in Sydney. I found myself unwinding by laying out on Bondi Beach. The sun was hot and the beach was full of people enjoying every minute of it. It's almost always packed on sunny days. Surfers gathered on one section of the beach to take their turn riding the waves.

A scenic path known as The Costal Walk connects Bondi Beach to several other beaches. Between the beaches the path led into hills with rounded cliffs and rock-pools. The cliffs have been beautifully shaped from hundreds of years of waves.

After a long stroll along the coast I sat down with my laptop to work on an assignment. With so much going on it was easy to fall behind—which I had. The beach was a great place to get work done, unlike the hostel where I was staying. The vast majority of guests that were 18-30 years old from Europe (with a few Canadians thrown in), had come to Bondi Beach to party, surf, and generally have a good time. I had a blast playing beer pong, card games, and late nights on the beach. Yet I couldn't help feeling out of place with a textbook. These people were here purely for fun and enjoyment, while I was... something not quite that.

Despite the always Saturday atmosphere of Bondi I managed to get a lot done staying there over the next few weeks. Slowly but surely, I started to catch up on my course work. Of course, there was still the issue of finding an invigilator to facilitate my exam. In the past I'd always taken exams at my local college, which was easy and convenient.

But when booking an exam outside of Canada you have to get in touch with an individual who is a registered invigilator. Being in a class with both a mid-term and an exam complicated matters further. While it's not as easy as walking to my local college, I have to give Athabasca credit for having an extensive list of invigilators around the globe.

However, choosing an invigilator from the list was something I'd have to figure out later, as it still wasn't clear if I'd stay in Sydney or continue on to another Australian city. Exploring the country was, after all, the main reason for coming. I can't say Bondi Beach ever got old, but after three weeks, I found myself wondering about all the Australian beaches not yet seen.



In Time

In this space I've written about the ongoing drama of building our new garage. It is complete enough that this weekend it housed my long-awaited three-day garage sale. In great style.

Roy, that lucky bugger, was registered for a conference in Edmonton and was nowhere in sight. That meant I needed to put up all the highway signs myself. Picture me with signs, a ballpeen hammer, and a sledgehammer (for back-up), risking life and limb on primary and secondary highways on a Friday afternoon, trying to pound these stakes into rock hard soil. And avoid being struck down in my prime. Okay, no more than ten years past my prime.

Over the course of the weekend Hilary, my mom, my aunt, and my sister all helped. Staffing garage sales is always a challenge. Not having enough help is a no-no, especially with certain sticky-fingered shoppers. Yet having a gaggle of helpers around with no action is guilt inducing for the help-requester.

Hilary was a trooper. She came out last weekend and helped move furniture out of the basement, wipe down stuff, and price items. This weekend she helped me Saturday and Sunday. Perhaps, best of all she volunteered to put the bigger-ticket items on Kijiji. After staging photo shoots, measuring for dimensions, and writing appealing descriptions, she posted the roll-top desk, Natuzzi tub chairs, occasional tables, twelve-volt cooler, and more. And because *no one* is going to drive to Andrew to check out this stuff, she packed the smaller items into her old Honda Civic so the tire-kickers can check out the goods at their convenience in Edmonton.

Half the fun of having a garage sale is the visiting with people. Seeing little kids trying out the tricycle or the battery-operated construction equipment. Watching a wannabe-dealer grouping and re-grouping the collector farm tractors until they total the hundred dollars in his wallet. Asking every single customer if they really, really need a calf puller. Seeing an elderly woman come back to buy a plush bunny

for a little girl who was admiring it. Seeing some hard-ass parents say no to every single thing their kid asks for. Or seeing couples enable each other's purchases.

The other kick is seeing something we've used and are done with go to a new home. Or the mixed emotions when a person gets pennies on the dollar for a dumb buying mistake that they hung onto so long that it can't be returned for a refund—or until no one else wants the damn thing. But I'm not bitter.

The consolation—more than eleven hundred dollars in sales (before Kijiji)—is nothing to sneeze at. The extra space created in home and yard is priceless. Just not sure I'm up to this again very soon. This kid is pooped. Maybe it's like childbirth. In time, I'll forget the pain and try it again, from where I sit.

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



Dear
Barb

Barbara Godin

Exercising Freedom

Dear Barb:

I am in my twenties and just graduated from AU. I'll be starting a full time job in July. I am so excited and anxious to get on with my life. My two-year-old daughter and I will be moving out of my parent's home and into my own apartment soon. My mom always helped me take care of my daughter while I was going to school, so I just assumed she was going to watch her when I begin working full time. I was shocked when I asked her and she said she does not want to babysit Tara full time. She said will babysit from time to time, at her convenience! Tara's father left shortly after she was born so I have been taking care of her by myself and now my mom is just going to leave me too. My mom says she wants to be a grandma not a full time babysitter. I can't believe my mother would be so selfish! I tried to get my dad to talk some sense into her, but he says it's not his decision. Don't you think my mother is being cold and selfish! Angry Angela

Hi Angela:

You definitely sound very angry in your letter; however I don't think you have the right to expect your mother to babysit full time. You ought to be thankful she helped you this long. Grandparents do not have an obligation to care for their grandchildren, but rather it is a choice. Some grandmothers enjoy caring for their grandchildren full time, while others do not want to be tied down to a full time commitment. Your mother is not being selfish; she has earned the right to live her life as she pleases; she has already raised her own children. This is your child, your responsibility. Your mother said she will help

you out from time to time and you have to be thankful for that. It might be time to look into day care for your daughter and thank your parents for the accommodations and care they have given to both you and your daughter for the last two years. Congrats on landing a job so quickly, I can see that you are on your way to good future. Enjoy, and thanks for writing Angela.

Dear Barb:

I am in my early forties and looking for a quick exercise program that I can do before I go to work in the morning, keeping in mind I have two school age children. I am not really over weight, I just feel gravity is taking a toll on my muscle tone and I'm starting to feel limited in my movement. My kids do keep me busy, but I notice there are a lot of movements that I used to be able to do that I find difficult to do now. Do you know of any program that would fit my requirements? Thanks, Mandy.

Hey Mandy:

Thanks for writing. I have the perfect program for you, but I must advise you to confirm with your physician that you are able to undertake an exercise program. Classical Stretch by Miranda Esmonde-White, is an excellent program to reverse the effects of gravity. It only requires 20 minutes a day, which I'm sure you can manage. Her DVD's are available on Amazon.com. To help you understand her theories and techniques, I would suggest you begin by reading her book *Aging Backwards* it is available at most bookstores and online. Happy Stretching!

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

Weird Canada

The Devil's Face in the Queen's Hair

For the 1954 Canadian banknotes, the devil was in the details. A careful scrutiny of the Queen's curls revealed a hideous face. The semblance was completely accidental, but the controversy it stimulated compelled the Bank of Canada to edit the portrait. The "Devil's Face" bills are now much in demand by collectors.



WHAT, ME WORRY?

WANDA WATERMAN



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Did you know?

On April 9th, LinkedIn announced it had entered into an agreement to purchase lynda.com for about US \$1.5 billion. Lynda offers professional on-line training videos and courses for everything from photo editing with Adobe Photoshop® to creating a WordPress page.

AUSU will continue to bring you a \$375 membership for **free**!

To register for your free lynda.com on-line software training account, simply create your ausu.org account, log-in, and click on the Lynda link at the bottom of our home page. You will then be redirected to Lynda's AUSU portal where you can create an account to receive unlimited access to lynda.com's full video library!

Last Chance to Win AUSU Swag!

We want to give you 1 of 5 amazing AUSU Prize Packs!! Just fill out our short survey about the AUSU services that affect YOU, and then enter the draw! The survey is quick and painless, and your input will help us determine how to best represent YOU, AUSU's members!

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

Draw will take place on June 15th.

IMPORTANT DATES

- June 11-13: Convocation at AU! Congratulations!
- June 15: AUSU swag draw for survey respondents
- July 8: AUSU Council Meeting
- July 10: Last day to register for courses starting Aug 1
- August 10: Last day to register for courses starting Sept 1

New Executive Twitter Accounts

Each AUSU Executive Councillor has an official new twitter handle – AUSU_president, AUSU_VPEX, & AUSU_VPFA. Each account is customized to the current Executive filling that role, and will later be handed over to incoming Executives during a transition period. Please tweet us or follow us on twitter! We look forward to connecting with you!



NOW AVAILABLE! Athabasca University Students' Union
Student Health & Dental Plan

For the Benefit of those that Depend on Us

What's Covered?

Ambulance • Prescription Drugs • Health Practitioners • Dental
Accident • Medical Equipment & Supplies • Dental • Tutorial
For further details please visit mystudentplan.ca/athabasca

Am I Eligible?

Students become eligible once they have reached their second course (or 6 credits) in a year. Coverage will start on the 1st of the month following your enrolment if you register before the 10th of the month.
If you register later in the month, coverage will start the 1st 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.

How do I Access the Plan?

Use your myBenefits Cards to submit claims at the Pharmacy, Dental Office and Health Practitioners. Download your card today at mystudentplan.ca

Submit your claims online or via mobile app with Great-West Life GroupNet available for free for Android, iPhone and Blackberry.

mystudentplan.ca • 1.877.746.5566 ext. 249 • athabascaplan@mystudentplan.ca

Press Releases

Did you know that AUSU posts press releases on its website with important details of the latest goings-on at AUSU?

Check out our press releases page here:

<http://www.ausu.org/council/press.php>

CLASSIFIEDS

Classifieds are free for AU students! Contact voice@voicemagazine.org for more information.

Views and articles presented here are those of the contributors and do not represent the views of AUSU Student Council

THE VOICE

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