

THE VOICE

MAGAZINE

Vol 23 Issue 27 2015-07-03

Minds We Meet

Interviewing Sandra Livingston

Teachings of the Hounds

Schooling From the Dogs

Writing Away From it All

Locations for Concentration

Plus:

*The Travelling Student
From Where I Sit
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**First in Line****Karl Low**

I hope you had a happy Canada day, and, if you're American, an equally good Independence Day.

Ask me on any other day of the year, and I'll be quite happy to tell you all about how I think the concepts of nationalism and patriotism are causing more harm in the world than good. But, come Canada day, that doesn't stop me from putting on my goofy, super-tall red and white hat, and spending the morning of every Canada day running around to various festivals and activities being held in the city. For all my protests against nationalism, I have to admit that when it comes to Canada, I've always been fiercely proud of what we've created here.

It's not perfect, of course. We've certainly had our problems, from residential schools to internment camps to eugenics, Canada has not always been a terribly enlightened place, even though we like to think of ourselves as such. But part of what makes me proud of Canada is that we have this ability to look back on those activities, and, while understanding that they were wrong, also understand that part of why we know they're wrong is because we've improved.

This week is also the start of the annual Calgary Stampede. This is one of those events that I think that, one day, we will look back on and understand the wrong we've been doing. The idea of carnival is fairly universal, and the stampede's origins in the humble agricultural fair are not to be discounted. However, every year we hear of animals killed in the chuck-wagon events, or significantly injured in the rodeo, and I find myself wondering if we really need to pursue that kind of entertainment. Knowing that the risk of injury or death to an animal each year is extremely high, how can people justify paying money to support these kind of events any more than, say, dog-fighting? Oh, certainly, the Stampede proponents like to go on about how well the animals are treated the rest of the time, but really, that's irrelevant. Treating animals well should be the base of behavior, using it to justify the stress and risk of injury or death they get put through for our entertainment is hardly acceptable.

Yet this privately run exhibition of brutality gets government funding most years, as a nod to our heritage. I wonder, would people be so sanguine if the government decided to resume the practice of residential schools as a similar nod to "our heritage"?

Needless to say, I don't attend the Stampede. I endure the extra traffic, I take advantage of the many other events our city hosts during the same period, but the Stampede itself I steer clear of. Which is too bad, really, because they often bring in various entertainment that I'd like to see, and aside from the rodeo and chuck wagon races, there are so many interesting and fun things there that it really is a loss. I keep being hopeful, however, that one day enough people will decide they don't want to pay to put animals at risk for their entertainment. When that happens, I'll be the first in line. Until then, enjoy the read!

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

MINDS WE MEET



Sandra Livingston is an AU student from Ontario, who divides her time between Newmarket and Kingston. In addition to being a regular contributor to The Voice Magazine, Sandra is the author of several books. Her next book, A Queen's Revenge, will be coming out in February 2016. Sandra is in AU's BA program, majoring in history.

The Voice Magazine recently interviewed Sandra about writing, queens, and following your dreams.

Whereabouts do you live?

Right now I'm in Kingston. My husband teaches in the Yukon, so during the school year I live with family in Newmarket. That keeps me close to our children and grandchildren. In the summer, we spend our time at our place in Kingston.

Do you work in addition to taking courses?

I've worked all my life doing writing, editing, and managing internal communications and company intranets. I spent several years working for Magna International. After taking an editing course at Ryerson University, I saw an ad for the editor's position at *The Voice* and I became the magazine's managing editor for three years.

Following that, I took the plunge and began writing books. Right now, I divide my time between AU courses and writing. Periodically, I do some contract work in writing and communications.

Which program are you in at AU?

I've changed my major twice. I started at AU in 2002. I'm only taking two courses per year, one at a time. I think this will be the longest BA in history! I started out majoring in Communications Theory. Despite my background in communications, I eventually realized this wasn't the program for me. I switched to an English major, even though I lost quite a few credits from my PLAR in the process. I figured it was better to be at the bottom of a ladder I wanted to be on, than half-way up one I didn't. Later on, I took a few history courses as electives. I realized that my passion was history, so I changed majors again. I now have seven more courses to go for my degree.

I find that, with university courses, you don't just learn about the material, you learn about yourself and where you want to go. Learning helps you clarify where your interests lie.

Describe the path that led you to AU.

Years ago when I was a young parent, university seemed like another world. It just didn't seem possible to find the time or the money. I took a few odd courses over the years, and in the mid-to-late '90s I took some English and editing courses. I enrolled in a journalism program at Seneca College, but the program was cancelled before I could finish.

I heard about AU from a friend who is an administrator at Ryerson. I had never heard of AU. Up to that point, a university degree seemed an impossibility. I researched AU and then registered for my first course. It was great that I could go to university without giving up my job or having to travel to another city.

What do you do like to do in your leisure time?

I love writing, obviously. And I love to travel; we've always been very mobile. I spend some time in the Yukon each year, and on March breaks we pick a random place to visit—last year it was Charlotte, NC. We've also travelled to London, and to France. I'd like to visit Ireland and also Australia.

What happens after you finish your education?

Well, my husband has me thinking about pursuing a masters degree, but I want a year or two with no textbooks first. Whatever I do will probably combine history and travel. I started my studies purely for personal growth. Now, I realize that historical fiction is the genre I want to write in. I'm at the point where my education and my writing have come together.

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

My husband, absolutely. Even in his twenties, with a job and young children, he was taking evening courses at Concordia to earn his first degree. When he got laid off a few decades later, he decided to pursue his dream of becoming a teacher. He went back to school and got his B.Ed while in his fifties. He's a big believer in learning for the sake of learning. He's the one who encouraged me when I was wondering if it was worthwhile to go back to school. "Why *wouldn't* you do it?" he said.

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

Without a doubt it would be Queen Elizabeth I. She is such a fascinating figure. She was a strong woman at a time when women were not allowed to be strong. She managed to survive in a political landscape in which it was difficult for anyone—man or woman—to survive.

Describe your experience with online learning so far.

I love that it gives me opportunities I wouldn't have had otherwise. It really opened up possibilities for me. And the flexibility means I can study even when I travel north or across the country. I've always been an independent learner, so AU's independent study works for me. However, the closer I get to completing my degree, the more I realize that it's easier to absorb and retain information when there are other students around.

Have you had a time when you wavered about your education?

Oh, yes. I took the *Industrial Revolution* course and had difficulty getting through the textbook; it was written in such a ponderous and academic style. When I was halfway through I thought the course would do me in. I wondered, "Is it really worth all this effort?" I almost threw in the towel. I didn't know if I could finish it but my husband encouraged me to keep going. I ended up applying for the maximum number of extensions and handed in the final assignment four days before the last deadline. Having had that experience, I think I would tell other students to find a way to get past the rough patches.

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

It was my very first course, PHIL 252, *Critical Thinking*. At first I hated it, but now I love it. PHIL 252 really changed my brain and opened up new ways of thinking for me. It was a difficult course with concepts that were foreign to me. I had to completely focus on it, and I looked up additional materials online. Now I recognize it as a valuable course; it really opened a window for me.

Describe the proudest moment (or greatest accomplishment) in your life.

It's not a single moment, but I'm going to say my family. It's been satisfying seeing my children find the things they love to do, and watching my husband head out the door on his first day of teaching school at age 56. It's just been great watching everyone discover where their interests are and then follow their hearts and pursue what they love.

Have you given up anything to go to AU? Was it worth it?

Nothing. Going to AU has been such a great opportunity. I've been at it for 13 years, and it's taken time and money. But I haven't given up anything of greater value than I've gotten out of it.

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

It would be a big project, but I would institute a plan to go through all the course materials and textbooks to make sure they are written in a way that students can understand. It's essential that these materials communicate to students in clear, plain language. If the writing is not getting the message to the students, it's undermining their efforts to learn.

If you could wake up tomorrow with a "superpower", which one would it be?

I would want the ability to travel through time. After my lunch with Elizabeth I, I would go back in time to witness the great events of history, and the small events, too. Then I would come back and write about them to make people's stories real.

If you were trapped on a tropical island, what 3 things would you bring?

First, I'd want a satellite phone, so I could call for help. Second, I'd like to have somebody with me who was super-handy, who could build shelters and such and hunt for food. Finally, I'd bring a library (this would need to be a big island.)

Describe one thing that distinguishes you from most other people.

Well, about 30 years ago a friend told me, "You have a way of expressing an idea, of explaining things, in a way that makes people get it."

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

To be patient and to persevere.

What do you think about e-texts?

I thought I would love them, but I hate them. I'm all about technology, so I was enthusiastic about e-texts and looked forward to them. Now that I've used them, I realize e-texts are not an optimal method for study. I find I don't absorb the material as well, and I find e-texts harder to navigate than regular texts.

How do you find communications with your course tutors?

99% of the time it's been awesome. There have been a couple in particular who were enthusiastic and approachable. I've had the occasional tutor, though, where we just didn't click.

Where has life taken you so far?

Besides the places I mentioned earlier, it's been mostly within Canada. I lived in the Yukon, and a remote community in northern Saskatchewan, and I spent almost four years in Newfoundland. My children and grandchildren are in the Newmarket area, so now I divide my time between there and Kingston, where my husband joins me during his summer break.

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

I'm reading *The Guns of August* by Barbara W. Tuchman. It's a Pulitzer Prize-winning book about the outbreak of WWI.

Any summer plans?

I plan to lay low for the summer, spending time with my family. I'll spend time with my husband and my grandchildren, and drink coffee on the deck. And I'll be finishing my latest novel, *A Queen's Revenge*, which is about Queen Boudicca.

Final question: you've been writing for *The Voice* for years, how has that experience been?

I've been writing for *The Voice* since 2002, almost from my first days of being a student at AU. I think it's important to have a variety of student voices. There were some views expressed a few months ago that the magazine should be all about educational issues, but I don't agree. If a history student writes about historical figures, for example, and an IT student writes a tech column about tech trends, then other students can benefit. It's also the opportunity to give something back to the AU community. And, since many writers are students, the pay they receive for writing for *The Voice* ends up back at AU when those students pay for more courses.

Click of the Wrist**Suit Up**

Sunshine, sand, sunscreen—essentials for a day at the beach. And don't forget the swimsuit! This weekend we celebrate the bikini's 69th birthday with a glance back at swim fashion throughout the decades.

Evolution

From the bathing machines (really!) of the early 19th century through the itchy bikinis of today, the evolution of the swimsuit is a fascinating journey through social mores. This CNN slideshow depicts men's and women's swimwear fashions from 1825 onward.

Enter the Bikini

When French engineer Louis Reard debuted his bikini in 1946, the only woman willing to model the scandalous suit was a French stripper. How things have changed almost 70 years later! This *Time* slideshow highlights the bikini's history, and the women who made it the fashion staple it is today.

Winning Suit

While casual and fashion swimwear have trended in one direction, competitive swimwear favored by athletes has its own unique history. This *New York Daily News* slideshow demonstrates how Olympic swimmers have suited up over the years.



Writing Away From it All

Barbara Lehtiniemi



Many people dream of a little cottage away from it all. A place to retreat from the world for a time, gather one's thoughts, and maybe write a little. A little Walden Pond of one's own.

If you're a writer, this dream could be closer than you think. A writers' retreat may be just the thing you need to give you time and space for writing, and to advance your writing career.

Writers' retreats, in general, are small houses or other accommodations offered up as a quiet place for writing, away from it all. The retreats are hosted, in some cases, by arts or heritage groups, and some are former residences of writing luminaries. You can find writers' retreats across Canada and beyond. Qualifying criteria vary widely, as do financial arrangements. Some

retreats charge a weekly fee, while others, including those listed below, pay a stipend to the writer and will sometimes assist with travel costs.

Here are a few notable Canadian writers' retreats for published writers that provide remuneration to the writer-in-residence:

Al Purdy's A-Frame. Al Purdy was one of the great Canadian poets (if you took ENGL 212, you'll remember *The Country North of Belleville*.) The A-frame cottage he built on the shore of Roblin Lake, near Ameliasburg, Ontario, became a meeting place for writers of all stripes. The cottage now hosts a writer-in-residence program for part of each year. Applications are usually taken in the fall, with the line-up of writers announced in the spring. Writers selected receive \$2500 per month during their residency, and travel expenses are paid. In exchange, resident writers are expected to give one public lecture or reading during each month of their stay. Visit www.alpurdy.ca for more details.

Berton House Writers' Retreat. Pierre Berton was a journalist and a prolific author; he's especially known for his Canadian histories, such as *The Last Spike*. This retreat is Berton's childhood home in Dawson City, Yukon. The house is offered for four 3-month residencies per year. Each writer in residence receives a \$6000 honorarium, and travel expenses are paid. Resident writers are encouraged to interact with the community during their stay. The deadline for applications for the 2016-2017 resident program is October 2, 2015. See bertonhouse.ca for details.

Haig-Brown Heritage House. The heritage house of Canadian writer and conservationist Roderick Haig-Brown, in Campbell River, BC, offers five-month residencies for writers each winter. Applications for the winter of 2016-2017 must be submitted by January 15, 2016. The resident writer receives a stipend of \$2000 per month, and up to \$1000 is provided for travel expenses. Writers are expected to spend 40% of their time on community engagement activities; the remaining time is for their own writing projects. See www.haig-brown.bc.ca/writer-residence for more details.

These writers' retreats are generally geared to writers who have already published at least one book, with the Al Purdy writers' residency in particular focusing on writers in the early stages of their career. If you are a published writer, you might consider applying for one of these residencies so that you can work on your next writing project in a place of quiet retreat. If you're still working on—or dreaming about—your first book, knowing about these attractive retreat programs may give you the impetus you need to get your first project finished.

Next week, we'll look at retreat options for yet-to-be-published writing hopefuls.

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



Music Review

Soul Trigga ft. Rich Kidd

Samantha Stevens



Single: "Soul Trigga ft. Rich Kidd"

Artist: ESMA

It's been awhile since I reviewed a single. Typically I prefer to listen to an entire album to get a good idea about a musician's talent. But when I listened to ESMA's latest single "Soul Trigga" I was so blown away by her music that I couldn't wait to review the track.

From Toronto, ESMA is gaining international recognition for her obvious talents as a singer, songwriter, and dancer. ESMA has opened for artists like Karl Wolf, LMFAO party rock crew, Kos, and Dirty Radio, and she is known for her unique sound that combines Hip & Hop, Pop, and various sounds from around the world.

"Soul Trigga" is ESMA's third single and features Juno award winner Rich Kidd, who has worked with artists like Drake and Busta Rhymes.

Perhaps the first thing that I love about this song is the opening beat that reminds me of Calypso music with a splash of Middle Eastern musical influence. ESMA's voice is stunningly beautiful, and her ability to sing both high and low notes is amazing. I can't rave enough about her vocals. Her singing is so mysterious and alluring that I can't help but feel like she is some goddess of music who captivates all who listen to her. And, combined with the steady rhythmic pulsing of the music, I know that this song will be in my head for days.

The next ingenious element of "Soul Trigga" is the brief interjection by Rich Kidd. His solo helps break up the song and make it so the track does not become boring, something that often happens in modern music.

There is also a video for "Soul Trigga" that showcases some of ESMA's live performances. I love how this video is done, because not only does ESMA open the video with a brief intro, where we get to see how sweet of a person she is, but she also features her dancers and Rich Kidd's past performances in the video. Viewers are also treated to ESMA's amazing dancing.

Also in the video, if you pay close attention, you will notice that ESMA performed one of her singles at a Fashion Against Cancer fundraiser, which led me to checking out her webpage where she has a page specifically titled "Giving Back". On this page, ESMA proudly displays the foundation and charities that she supports. I can't help but love her dedication to helping those around her, while using her talents to further her support.

So if you are looking for a catchy song that will have you up and dancing, and, even better, is by a Canadian artist, I highly recommend checking out "Soul Trigga ft. Rich Kidd" by ESMA.

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

Student Sizzle AU's Hot Social Media Topics

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



AUSU Student Forums

In the Business and Administration course discussion forum, user "derdall" wonders if a 4-year Bachelor of Mgmt looks better on a resume than a 3-year. Other topics include AU's financial situation and course ACCT 355.

AthaU Facebook Group

Heidi wants to know if a transcript assessment takes the full eight weeks. Tamra is curious to know what other students think of the new AU Student Success Centre. Nicole seeks tips on science credits to take that will help in her teaching career.

Other postings include procrastination panic, course deadline reminders, outdated texts, maximum word counts, and courses FREN 420, HIST 338, HRMT 300, HSRV 420, LGST 369, and PSYC 375.

Twitter

@AthabascaUSU (AUSU) tweeted three press releases in three days:

"AUSU has a new press release. Check it out here: <http://bit.ly/1fByjCR>",

"AUSU has a new press release regarding AGM motions. You can view it here:

http://www.ausu.org/downloads/Press_Release_June_25_2015.pdf",

and "AUSU has a new press release at http://www.ausu.org/downloads/Press_Release_June_26_2015.pdf."

In Conversation

With Faded Paper Figures

Wanda Waterman



"Strangers looking fine,
like nothing's on the line,
but deep, deep down inside
we'd all want to resign
if nothing's on the line,
we wouldn't last the night
if nothing's on the line."
- Faded Paper Figures, "On The Line"

Faded Paper Figures (FPF), an indie trio comprised of Heather, R. John Williams, and Kael Alden, met in California and then went their separate ways. But somehow remained together as a band; they wrote, composed,

recorded, and traded tracks at a distance while pursuing arduous career paths in medicine, academia, and professional music production. Their most recent album, *Relics*, was recommended [here](#) in the *Voice*. Recently band member (and Yale prof) R. John Williams, took the time to answer Wanda Waterman's questions about their backgrounds, motivations, and secrets of success.

How did you all manage to build a successful band and recording career while working toward such arduous career goals?

FPF: The band didn't start out as a "career," and none of us were thinking that it would become one, but we feel very lucky that this thing we all love (and thought would be just a "side" thing) has gone on to become such a big part of our lives. Really the only way we've been able to keep our day jobs has been to not even try to do all the things expected of a typical indie band. So we rarely tour, and when we do, they're short, two-week excursions. It's really the only way we can keep things going, but we feel super fortunate that it's worked out so far.

For you, for example, what was a typical day like while you were both studying and/or working and creating songs with FPF?

FPF: A "typical" day generally means that John is on the east coast (teaching, writing, etc.) and Kael and Heather are in Los Angeles (doing music production and being a doctor, respectively), and then, sometime after dark, we'll turn our attention to the songs we're working on. Then things can sometimes go until 2:00 a.m. or later, but that all depends on where we are in the process of writing and recording. Eventually, when we need to really accelerate the songs or production, John will fly out to LA for a week and we'll spend the whole time just working on band stuff.

Describe your musical background. What role did music play in your childhood?

FPF: Music was an integral part of all of our childhoods. We all have early memories of falling in love with music.

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

FPF: It's of course different for each member of the band (and there were figures in all of our lives growing up who were important), but if we were to answer collectively, we'd have to say that it was those first fans we

encountered when we began putting music online back in 2007. We got feedback and encouragement from people all over the world (at the time it was all on myspace or garageband.com), and this pushed us to work harder to improve nearly every aspect of our songs.

What was the most mesmerizing musical experience of your life?

FPF: As a band, perhaps our most "mesmerizing" moment (or moments) happened during our last tour when, every once in a while, things would really "click" and we'd be playing at our best and really connecting with the audiences. Of course, it didn't happen at every moment in every show, and there are always times when it seems like everything that can go wrong on stage inevitably does, but that's all punctuated by moments of mesmerizing magic, when everything just seems to be working perfectly.

(to be continued)



The Writer's Toolbox **A Company Affair, Part IV**

Christina M. Frey



Over the past few installments we've explored the relationship between brand names and the written word. Last week we discussed whether to genericize product names, like Xerox vs. the verb "to xerox" or Google vs. "to google" (or "to Google," depending on which dictionary you use). This week we take things a step further and ask the bigger question: especially in fiction, should we be using brand names at all?

What is this stuff?

There are as many different answers to this question as there are writers, but a few guidelines are helpful if you're still developing your own perspective.

First, it's important to consider the effect of a particular brand name on your readers. Does it evoke a certain mood, a social class, a lifestyle? A character grabbing their daily Frap from the Starbucks drive-through has a different connotation than a character ordering a handcrafted iced, whipped coffee from the local beanery. A grocery run to Whole Foods is probably

going to *sound* more yuppie than shopping at the health food store.

Consider, too, whether the brand name you're using has a regional link that might confuse readers from a different geographic area. Sadly, most Americans have no idea what's meant by a box of Timbits.

Finally, is there a chance that the brand name may become dated or obsolete? If your book is set in the 1980s, Dino Pebbles on the breakfast table makes sense, but if you're writing something more timeless, be cautious of the effect the casual mention of brands may have. Electronics technology is particularly susceptible to this issue.

It doesn't have to be so complicated...

Then there's the question of clear, concise writing. Sometimes trying to use a generic reference is so awkward and unwieldy that keeping the real-life brand name makes a more readable sentence. "She typed the words into the search engine" is a lot clunkier than the direct "She googled it."

Additionally, generic references can often feel strained and unnatural in dialogue. Kleenex might not be happy about their brand dilution, but not many people today say "Do you have any facial tissue in your purse?"

...unless there's a legal question

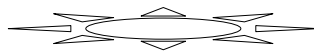
Where does the law come in? That's a tricky question, but as [this article](#) suggests, the biggest issue centers around what's called brand tarnishment, or defamation. Simply put, companies don't want to look bad, and they're more likely to crack down on references that paint them or their products in a bad light.

It's obvious that if your character finds a fingernail in their calzone, it's better if the order comes from Joe Schmo's Pizzeria rather than a national chain. What might be harder to spot are instances where nothing bad *happens*, but there are negative connotations. In these cases, err on the side of caution and go with generic, even when it's all a big joke. For example, if your characters are laughing about amusement park character costumes being a great way to score hot single moms, you'd best be talking about a made-up amusement park—or risk legal action.

Final thoughts

Whether you're using brand names in fiction or simply checking whether to capitalize the name of a product, the key takeaway from our Toolbox mini-series is this: respect is key, both of the work the company's put into its brand creation and of the people who use and speak about the product every day.

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](#).



Study Tips from a Semi-Anonymous Friend How to Write Like a Top Student

There is nothing more that The Study Dude wants for you than to cite yourself in your second journal publication.

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 with the book by Paul J. Silvia, PhD, called *Write It Up: Practical Strategies for Writing and Publishing Journal Articles*. "Do sweat the small stuff," Silvia professes.

Attention to those icky details--the small stuff--pave the road to publication like a bricklayer in heaven laying the icky mortar for gold, emerald, and sapphire bricks. So, go ahead and savour the following insights on how to write a journal article.

Learn How to Make Your Introduction an Eye Opener

Writing the first sentence of an academic paper pains me, not unlike a back catcher in baseball accidentally pelted in the throat with the first strike. The process of writing a first sentence can either invigorate you or leave you jaded, or perhaps relegate you to some abysmal place in between. That abysmal place often receives visits from academics with their bloated, dry, eye-dropping introductions: *The study of the elegestolepis, a prehistoric shark, that looks at the creatures possible hydrodynamics, rarely appears in papers on aquatic animals.* (Hey, for a dull intro, that actually sounds interesting.) Your academic paper doesn't need to lull your reader to sleep by the first sentence. Make your intro compelling yet appropriate for your discipline. Make your intro spell out the big picture, the *so what?* Make your intro excite deep thought.

Paul Silvia lists examples of non-engaging versus engaging introductions to help you craft an eye-opener:

- Don't use dull opening statements such as "There is an increasing interest in" (p. 101). In other words, don't open by enumerating the various people interested in your research. Also, don't open by saying "very little is known about this topic." As Sylvia says, maybe the reason why your topic gets little traction is because it's passé or just plain bland.
- Don't start your paper with a dictionary definition or something along the lines of "According to the DSM" (p. 102) if you are part of the psychology field. (The DSM is the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual for Mental Disorders, by the way.)
- Instead, start with the big picture, or some sort of global picture, such as the larger issue that your research takes a stab at. Another option might include opening with a thought-provoking question—or better yet, three poignant questions in a row. Yet another option involves starting with some insightful revelation.

Learn a Basic Structure for Your Methods Section

In graduate studies, I created a method. The method systematized a way to send emails of questions to respondents that built upon one another. The method intended to produce a conversation on a grand scale. No-one paid heed to my method, and I never got around to actually documenting it in detail, so I no longer remember the details. But, hey, don't sweat the small stuff, right? But if you recall, Silvia says *do* sweat the small stuff, so I should have found a way to document that method and submitted it to some unsuspecting journal.

Frankly, my dilemma with submitting to a journal largely involved not knowing how to draft a journal article. My supervisor advised me to pass over the honours class in favour of a degree with distinction, so I lost the opportunity to learn the formats for theses and articles. These formats require at least study of two to three books on how to write a dissertation, in my opinion. Only after such a read-through can you truly get a grasp of the structures involved in writing theses and journal articles. Be warned: Winging the writing of a thesis, based on little study of the thesis structure, leads to exhaustion and poor results. Similarly, with journal articles, you need to learn the structure.

The following advice from Silvia will give you a foundation in writing a methods section for a publishable journal article:

- Use a new, groundbreaking methodology wherever possible. Discuss how other people used your methodology to get results and cite the papers in which they used the methodology.

- If you don't have room in the paper to list the full details of your methodology, then perhaps make an online archive of the research data and methodology. Archive "questionnaires, software files, and interview protocols" (p. 119).
- Break your methodology section into a number of headings: participants, procedure, apparatus, and measures/outcomes.

Learn Secrets for Reaping Results that Resonate

One book I read, called *The Dissertation Journey* by Carol M. Roberts (if my aged mind recollects properly), indicated that you could put your results in the form of charts and figures and then supplement the material with textual explanations. (Sorry, Carol, if that's not from your book.) Silvia is from the other camp, where he believes you should lay down all the textual information first, void of numbers, and then fill in the quantifiable goodies.

I once did a research project that used a survey to gain statistical information on the quality of a school museum. The research generated fascinating chart after chart, and our results section overflowed with visual data. The revelation of results thrilled me to no end, and the PowerPoint presentation looked plump full of pretty claims.

When it came to interpreting the data in words, I muddled over the charts and strew together weak statements. The beautiful, insightful charts fell short in the face of a poor interpretation. Yes, not only generating charts, but also interpreting data, requires a great deal of concerted effort and skill.

Silvia fills in the gaps for making your results section resonate with the following advice:

- Provide supporting evidence for your claims.
- Discuss findings and implications in the results section.
- Try removing all numbers from the results section. The results should read nicely without the numerical support. Once this clarity of thought cements, then move on to include the numerical and statistical data.
- Place your statistics inside tables, and add extra columns to report additional statistical measures, such as p-value and so forth.
- Some interesting things to include in your results section involve outliers, missing data, correlations, and summary scores.
- Determine what statistical approaches your intended journal of publication prefers before crafting the research.
- Start discussing your most important findings first; then, follow with the lesser important items.
- Paragraphs limited to one or two sentences often occur in the results section of your paper.
- Try not to add discussion on nonessential findings.

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

References

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The Travelling Student

Stick it to the Plan

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 installment I enjoyed a few weeks in on the sunny Bondi Beach in Sydney, Australia.

After a few weeks staying at the Surf Side Hostel on Bondi Beach I found myself wanting to explore more of the country. Visitors to Australia often underestimate the size of it. If you don't include Alaska and Hawaii Australia is about the same size as the United States, driving around the coast-line of Australia is a whopping 15,000km and takes almost a month to complete.

I'd come across an RV relocation deal where an RV can be rented (for FREE) in a popular destination (Sydney) and driven to a popular starting location (say, for instance, Cairns). The rental company will often refund your gas receipts, and in my case threw in a bonus \$150. The only down-side to the deal is the tight time-line. I'd be expected to drive from Sydney to Cairns in four days, three nights. Google Maps estimates the scenic route as being a 30-hour drive, so any less than 8 hours on the road a day and we'd be risking arriving late.

After reserving the RV I posted an ad on GumTree (the Kijiji of Australia and UK) offering a ride for some extra cash. With so many travellers arriving in Sydney daily the ride-share section of GumTree was booming. I soon found two German girls looking for a ride to Byron Bay (about half way between Sydney and Cairns).

The next morning I woke up and called the girls to confirm. They were packed and excited to hit the road. I excitedly called a cab to head to the RV rental place. After a fairly easy process of signing in to get my vehicle (and of course being hit with some small hidden fees) I walked out of the building with the keys.

I packed up and hoped in ready to start the ignition. As I turned the key the engine started up only to quickly stall, I repeated with the same results. I took a good look around the RV and to my horror realized I was in a manual. I tried a few more times to get the vehicle working but I figured it would be enough getting use to driving in a city of five million who drive on the left side of the road without having to learn to drive manual.

I left the rental place to meet the German girls at a nearby subway station. I'd have to tell them the bad news. From discussions with other Germans I knew that almost all Germans drive manual, and, if I was lucky, they'd be able to drive. I met the girls in the subway for the first time and had an extremely hard time explaining the situation. Their English was intermediate at best and when what I was finally saying clicked they gave me their best teary puppy eyes. As it turned out one of the girls claimed she could drive manual but didn't have a drivers licence. I decide not to take my chances. Not wanting to be there if the girls started crying I paid their subway fare and left.

To make my situation worse, I'd paid a deposit on the RV. I'd get it refunded, but only when I dropped the vehicle off in Cairns. Not ready to give up, I sat down and posted a new ad. "Free ride to Cairns must be able to drive stick."

The Mindful Bard

Advantageous

Wanda Waterman

Want Peace? Leave the Armour Behind



Film: *Advantageous*

Director: Jennifer Phang

Writers: Jennifer Phang and Jacqueline Kim

"It's good to be humble, but you need to know your value. The wisdom, the ideas, and the kindness in you— *that's* the secret beauty everyone wants."

- quote from *Advantageous*

Advantageous is a valuable addition to the tradition of *Brave New World*, 1984, *Fahrenheit 911*, *The Stepford Wives*, *The Matrix* and just a few more science fiction books and films that have something meaningful—and verifiable—to say about our current conditions.

We witness a prosperous but unstable urban society at some point in the next century. The news reports not only on growing terrorist acts, but also on the growing levels of child prostitution, something to be expected in a society that commodifies human beings as soulless sex

objects.

As in all the best science fiction, the film holds a mirror to the present. Which aspects of the present? The current plight of women and girls, for one thing. Today feminist consciousness and solidarity are at an all-time low, as laid out in the book *Getting Real: Challenging the Sexualisation of Girls* and this means that women are sometimes their own worst enemies.

Gwen Koh and her daughter Jules live a charmed life. Jules is a brilliant student. Gwen is blessed with the position of spokesperson for the Center for Advanced Health and Living, a bland moniker for a huge biotech corporation catering to the human need for one-upmanship. (A flashing sign on a building broadcasts the company's confused ideology: "Be the you you were meant to be.") But their days of prosperity are numbered as Gwen grows older and levels of female unemployment burgeon as Gwen's supervisor reveals that there's a move on to keep more women out of the job market so that the men can find enough work and thus feel better about themselves.

Competition is destroying the lives of the women around them. Gwen and Jules frequently hear sobbing from the woman upstairs, the woman downstairs, or both. As Gwen goes to her appointments she finds a woman sleeping under a shrub, another fishing to sustain herself.

Contrast the high-pressure competitive spirit of this society with the tenderness of the two consecutive opening scenes and your heart will melt. In the first Gwen and Jules sing together at the piano in sweet harmony. In the second Jules and two friends dance in slow motion down the street, one after the other, carrying their books and musical instruments. If you already know that this film has something to say about the untouchable majesty of the female, you can't miss the melody: girl, you are so, so beautiful, just the way you are.

But competition must keep rearing its ugly head. One of the girls initiates an age-old word game, and you see how intensely the urge to win rules these precocious damsels. A flashing sign advertises a school enrollment lottery, a bizarre development that's nonetheless a firmly entrenched reality for many American public schools today.

The head of Gwen's company is a jaded, icy boss lady who manipulates Gwen by making her feel disempowered, and Gwen is clearly terrified that she won't be able to make a decent living, leaving Jules to fall through the cracks. She wants her daughter to be able to enter an expensive "bonding camp," the initiative of a group of single-minded moms with a fascist zeal to turn their offspring into an elite class.

Jules is definitely on board, but the self-improvement dogma of this society sometimes rings a bit hollow for the inquiring mind, especially when the future presents such a narrow corridor of hope. In one scene Jules remarks sadly, "I need to be better. But why?" However, Gwen knows what matters, and teaches her daughter well: "It's good to be humble, but you need to know your value. The wisdom, the idea, and the kindness in you—*that's* the secret beauty everyone wants."

In spite of knowing what's right, Gwen makes a tragic sacrifice for her daughter. But, if you look closely, you see that it had been her intention to give up her individual consciousness in order to enter a higher consciousness that transcends individuality. Ultimately this is what it means to live in love—to lose the ego's boundaries in order to become one with the objects of our love.

Christianity plays a salient, though background, role here. Gwen's father is a minister and her mother preaches to her about her sin. She and Jules celebrate a blessed Christmas during which they sing a carol about the birth of the divine child. And of course, there's the sacrifice she makes of herself, one that has striking parallels with the gospel story.

The film sports exquisite cinematography with loving attention to meaningful details like dry leaves, a dead butterfly, gorgeous abstract water sculptures, the texture of a woodland path, or strands of hair caressing a cheek. All of these visual treasures meld beautifully with a soundtrack that's utterly unconventional for sci-fi, with acoustic instruments and the loveliest of found sounds.

Set designs are remarkable too; I love Gwen's apartment, filled with books and *wabi sabi* antiques—just the kind of home you'd expect for an intelligent, frugal woman who loves beauty and isn't concerned with showing off. They were so wise not to have gone populuxe with this.

Advantageous 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 stimulates my mind.
- It provides respite from a cruel world, a respite enabling me to renew myself for a return to mindful artistic endeavor.
- It's about attainment of the true self.
- It inspires an awareness of the sanctity of creation.
- It displays an engagement with and compassionate response to suffering.
- It makes me appreciate that life is a complex and rare phenomena, making living a unique opportunity.

Teachings From the Hounds

Deanna Roney



These last few days have been a trying time. I took one of our dogs into the veterinary clinic on Friday, concerned as he was not acting like himself. I thought he was constipated, and was worried that he might have a chunk of bone lodged somewhere in his system. What started out as a quick trip into the veterinary clinic to get him checked out resulted in a lot of stress and numerous trips back. When I want, the worst I was imagining was surgery to remove the blockage, but it turns out our boy has an autoimmune disease.

It is very dangerous, very concerning, and means trips back to the clinic every few days for blood work to see how the drugs are working and if we

are making ground. The disease makes him very sleepy as he is trying to recover and get his system back in balance. But, with the clinic just under an hour away, a road trip he usually enjoys has become a bit of a stressor on us all. My husband and I have spent much of our time since then with him sleeping on our lap, trying to convince him to eat, and feeding him pills. I have attempted, unsuccessfully, to write left-handed while he rested on my right arm. He is not a lap dog by any means, weighing in at just over a hundred pounds.

The time spent with him has given me lots of time to think, and, with my inability to utilize my left hand to take notes, schoolwork has taken a back seat. I have been thinking about what our three dogs, our boys, as we call them, have taught me over the years.

They have taught me that just because you have a sweet personality doesn't mean you can't be intimidating when you want to be. That just because you are too short to see over the fence doesn't mean you can't spring up and sneak a peek. They have taught me that sometimes holding hands, or paws, is the best solution to any problem. That a little love and affection can go a long way.

They have shown me that even though they are big, sometimes even they need help—and that's ok. That even though I am an adult and can fend for myself there is no shame in asking for help. That even though you can handle a scary situation on your own, it is ok to want your mom there to hold your hand. They have shown me, time and time again, that a little perseverance can go a long way. That while some people have to chase the stick into deep water, some are ok to wait until it is brought in to shallower water, fearful of swimming—but even a fear can be tested when no one is watching.

Our boys have shown us that love trumps hate, and have lain at my feet for hours while I work on school, or while my husband works in his office. They are patient, but if they feel neglected they are not shy to remind us that they need some attention. That while what we are doing is important sometimes we have to take some time away and just enjoy life.

And, aside from unconditional love, I think the most important thing they have taught me is that not everyone is going to make a positive impact on your life, that some will approach aggressively and try to bring you to their level. But, instead of staying and fighting, the best thing to do is turn your shoulder and walk away. It is their issue, not yours.

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



Wonders Underfoot

Is there anything more gorgeous than a peony? Not only are they magnificent when they bloom but they also have so much more in their favour.

They are extremely hardy. I've never heard of winterkill taking these girls down. Considering that they die back to the ground each fall, it is a small miracle that by late June they've grown three or four feet in height and poured all that energy into dozens of blooms. These wonders live, problem-free, for decades. I've got a couple that are over thirty years old. They never need dividing and mine—touch wood—have never had any disease. I also have never fertilized them. I know, my bad. How much bigger could these six-inch blooms get if they had a little supplement?

Some people complain about the 'mess' they make with their spent blooms. Others avoid them because they usually have ants on them. Deadheading the plant as soon as the flowers fade prevents the petal dropping and has the added bonus of preventing seed formation which drains the plants energy. Giving the cut stems a vigorous shake before bringing a vase-full into the house usually addresses the second concern. I would never deprive myself of this special plant and the joy it brings because of issues like this.

The one thing I do need to address is buying some proper peony rings to help support the heavy load these stems bear. Hybridization and newer varieties have resulted in many more colours and far stronger stems. My makeshift supports are neither attractive, nor very effective, as the weight of these gigantic flowers pulls the stems to the ground. Or I suppose I could begin replacing them. Though I understand some hybrids can cost as much as a hundred dollars each.

Peonies come in a variety of forms including single, double, anemone, and Japanese. Websites exist with photo galleries, botanical names, and information about herbaceous, tree, and intersectional varieties.

Cutting stems while in the bud stage ensures longer vase life and allows you to bring this lovely scented over-achiever indoors to enjoy for a couple of weeks.

As counter intuitive as it seems, it's vital to avoid planting this perennial too deeply. Doing so will result in few or no flowers at all. Lois Hole's perennial book advises having the crown no deeper than one and half or two inches. Keeping the plant away from trees and in areas where it will receive at least six of sunlight also ensures success. I've got a couple that are struggling for that very reason. Since fall is the best time to plant, maybe a little move is in order.

Peonies are just the latest little miracle to have captured my attention and admiration. When one lives in over-drive it's easy to miss the small wonders underfoot. I'm trying very hard not to let that happen, 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

Beyond First Blush

Dear Barb:

I recently moved in with my boyfriend, after dating for almost a year. Before we moved in we got along great, rarely argued. Now, though, we argue all the time—mostly about money. Jay has his own house and has been managing his bills on his own. I assumed he would continue to pay for most things after I moved in. However I was willing help with some bills, but Jay thinks I should pay half of the expenses. This is tearing us apart. I can't afford to pay half the bills since I am only working part time and he is working full time. I don't know how to settle this, in fact I really feel like moving out. Our arguments get pretty heated and we both say hurtful things. I don't know how to resolve this, or if it can be resolved. Do you have any suggestions to save this relationship, or should we just end it and move on? Thanks Tracey.

Hi Tracey:

I don't think you should give up so easily. Relationships require a lot of work and compromise and this is the first of many hurdles you will have to cross in order to build a healthy functioning relationship. Obviously you didn't discuss the financial aspect of your relationship prior to moving in, which would have made things a lot easier. I believe the rule of thumb is that you should pay the expenses according to your income. For example, if you make half as much money as your boyfriend, then you should pay one quarter of the expenses and he should pay three quarters. However this is something you both have to work out and agree to. There are many agencies that offer debt-counseling services, perhaps you could meet with a counselor to help sort this out. In the meantime, try not to argue about this, as the mean, hurtful things you say to each other cannot be taken back

once they are said. Stick with it, you can work this out. Thanks Tracey for your great question.

Dear Barb:

I recently began dating someone and I really like her, she is smart, pretty, and a lot of fun when we are with a group of people. The problem is that when we are alone she talks nonstop and she is so boring that I find myself zoning out. She talks about her girlfriends and what this one said and what that one said. To be honest I am not interested in any of that stuff. I try to act interested, but I'm finding it more and more difficult to do. She is starting to get frustrated with me and accuses me of not listening. And she's right. How can I get her to stop this gossip talk without hurting her feelings ? Jesse.

Hey Jesse:

You will have to be specific. For example when she begins gossiping about her friends, tell her you are not interested in hearing about her friends and that you would rather talk about the two of you. This may be a habit with her, so you may have to gently remind her each time she slips back. Direct the conversation away from her friends and on to the two of you and the plans you are making. You mention that you have a lot of fun together, so spend more time on that aspect of your relationship. Thanks for your excellent question!

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

Dysfunctional Love Languages in Facebook Comments

The Language of Obligatory Flattery



Like · Comment · Share



Your new profile pic is so beautiful!

The Language of Hypersensitive Debate

Wanda Waterman Obama is odious axe-wielding demon spawn!

Like · Reply · 6 mins



Ahmed Krimi Don't you think you're being a little extreme?

Like · 2 mins



Wanda Waterman I guess I don't have the right to express my views! Why are you always preaching at me? You are SO unfriended!

Like · Just now

The Language of Cryptic Extreme Laughter

LMFAOAFTPITA

The Language of Covert Envy

Fun in the sun in Hawaii!



WRITTEN BY WANDA WATERMAN

Like · Comment · Share



Wanda Waterman It's nice that you're doing well enough to afford a vacation like that. Wish I could.

Like · Reply · 1 min



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IMPORTANT DATES

- July 8: AUSU Council Meeting
- July 10: Last day to register for courses starting Aug 1
- August 1: Estimated launch of mental health services
- August 5: AUSU Council Meeting
- August 10: Last day to register for courses starting Sept 1

New Services for AUSU Members!

At AUSU's most recent Council meeting on June 10th, Council voted in favor of three motions:

- Becoming a member of the Canadian Alliance of Student Associations,
- Partnering with Ceridian to provide our members with free mental health services,
- And accepting the project of redesigning AUSU's website, www.ausu.org, complete with online awards applications, AU course evaluations, and much more!

After several months of prep work, we're happy to be officially putting these projects into motion. We are very excited about what the next few months will bring for AUSU and its members!

Monthly Council Meetings

We would love for you to attend one of AUSU's monthly Council meetings! Our next Council meeting is being held by teleconference on July 8th at 5:30 MST.

Members can observe Council's discussion and votes during the formal meeting and participate in an informal discussion with councillors afterwards.

Please e-mail admin@ausu.org for call-in information and details. Hope to "see" you there!!

AUSU Services Survey Results

The results are in! Thank you to all the AUSU members who responded; your feedback will be very helpful to Council in moving forward.

View a summary of the survey results [here](#).

Free Lynda.com Subscription



Lynda.com offers professional online training videos and courses for everything from photo editing with Adobe Photoshop to creating a WordPress page. AUSU members can sign up for a Lynda.com membership valued at \$397 for FREE!

<http://www.ausu.org/services/lynda.php>

Did You Know?!?

Did you know that AUSU provides free laptop computers to students in need? If you are in need of a computer to complete your studies and are not able to purchase one on your own, apply for AUSU's computer bursary today!

<http://www.ausu.org/services/scholarships.php>

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