

# THE VOICE

## MAGAZINE

Vol 23 Issue 32 2015-08-07

### Meeting the Minds

Interviewing Dr. Kinshuk, III

### The Debate Continues

E-Texts & E-Reading

### Gone Reading

Catching up on Y/A Books

*Plus:*

*Music Review: Believe  
FWIS: Worth the Effort  
and much more!*



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# LETTERS TO THE EDITOR



Dear Deanna,

I understand what you mean by experiencing isolation. I did two online certificate with the Teluq (online university in Quebec) which I took a few course with AU. Indeed, it can be hard at times. But take courage, you will succeed if you persevere.

Online education has its advantages. While I completed my certificate in English, I went to work in Saskatchewan in a primary-secondary school. Then, I left with a working visa to Ireland. Although I did not work, I lived 6 months in Dublin. And during that time, I completed an AU course and had a professor from Dublin to be my invigilator.

After my two certificate, I completed my masters in disability studies at Trinity College Dublin. Now that I am done, I am writing a scientific article of my dissertation hoping to be published in an international journal. All this work seems invisible like yours. All this in the hope of going back to do my PhD in Ireland.

Do not give up, your're not alone. I met many PhD students while doing my masters. It is a lonely road PhD students go through although they meet other students.

What helps me, my true friend who understands perfectly what I am going through is God. He is my helper in time of need, basically all the time. He helped me to go through those tough times. And I experience tough times often being physically disabled. But this does not stop me from moving forward,

All the best with your studies and feel free to write as I am not on social media networks.

S. Martin  
MSc in Disability Studies  
Trinity College Dublin

*It's good to know we're not alone. – Ed.*

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

**EDITORIAL****Losing Focus****Karl Low**

Have you ever had one of those weeks when your brain just doesn't seem to be kicking in correctly? That's been this entire week for me. To be honest, it started last week when I was informed that my grandmother had died. She'd been ill for quite some time, so in a way the news actually came as a bit of a relief.

And even though we hadn't been close for years, it still seems odd to realize that she's not there anymore. I had been meaning to call her for ages, just to touch base and see how she was doing, but never seemed to find the time to do it. And now I can't. And even though I've never been one to be deeply affected by death, I find that I'm having difficulty concentrating on anything now. It's not that my thoughts are constantly going back to her, just that my mind refuses to stay still, and since it started when I heard the news about her, that's what I'm attributing it to.

For instance, this week, Maclean's Magazine held a debate among the leaders of the four major parties. Now that we're officially in the campaign for the leadership of Canada, such a thing would normally have my full attention. This time, however, I found myself agitated

and frustrated trying to concentrate on them. I suppose one could argue that it was because of the moderation, or rather, lack thereof, that provided little structure and had all four attempting to talk over each other at some points. Or you could argue that it was the paucity of policy put forward by all four of the leaders. Still, these things usually have me rapt. But I'm finding, more and more, that I simply don't care.

Fortunately for you, the writers for The Voice Magazine certainly do care, and you can see some of the results of that this week. This issue is, however, a little short. It seems writers are people too and the long weekend had its attractions. What this means, however, is that what you have now is a nice, quick read, so you can take your time over the third part of our interview with Dr. Kinshuk, as we look this week into advice he gives as to how you can best prepare for graduate school and tackle your studies.

We also have a new writer, Carla Knipe, who has submitted her first article about the new publishing regime that Amazon has brought into effect for e-books. If you're not an e-book author, this might not seem that important to you, but as a student, you should take a look at how Carla points out how this could also end up affecting academic texts and even the make-up of the courses that we take. In this era of post-secondary institutions trying to save every penny they can, the change could have serious effects on how course developers decide what materials to use.

We also have Barb Lehtiniemi giving us a look at some light summer reading, and Samantha Stevens and Wanda Waterman provide us reviews of music and books to keep you busy once you're finally done that essay. Plus our usual set of advice and other articles to keep you focused are all here in this week's Voice Magazine.

Enjoy the read!

A stylized, handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Karl".

# MEETING THE MINDS

## INTERVIEWS with AU's EDUCATORS



*The Associate Dean of AU's Faculty of Science, Dr. Kinshuk, currently holds an NSERC/iCORE/Xerox/Markin Industrial Research Chair for Adaptivity and Personalization in Informatics, and has more than 300 research publications in refereed journals. With all this going on, The Voice Magazine is very happy that he was able to take the time to be interviewed by our own Marie Well. You may also be interested in reading the first and second parts of this interview.*

**Marie: Do you use the Landing in your teaching practices? Why or why not?**

Kinshuk: Partly. As I mentioned, I only teach one course, and students are welcome to provide reflections on their learning and what they think of the various topics, but it is not compulsory. On the other hand, we use the Landing very heavily in our research based activities with our research students. Many of my students provide feedback on their course, what are the next steps, analysis of literature—all of that. In our research projects, we use the Landing for the discussions, all the shared experiences.

**Marie: If you had one piece of advice for online learners, what would it be?**

Kinshuk: My advice would be to find relevance in learning because learning is something that can be useful. Effective learning happens when you can see how useful it is in your context. Trying to find relevance means trying to find how a particular concept, a particular topic, can be used in your particular environment. That helps to understand the topic better. For me, the one piece of advice I would give is to find relevance. Don't think learning is in addition to everything you are doing. Try to make learning as part of what else you are doing, so that, first of all, learning doesn't become a burden, and second of all, it actually becomes better because you are using it immediately in your context.

Everything you learn has a certain application. You just have to find it. That requires much deeper reflection. Finding relevance, I would say, is one piece of advice.

**Marie: If you could wave a magic wand and improve one thing about online education, what would it be?**

Kinshuk: I would say learning in context. How could I make learning effective for individual students. Learning en masse doesn't really help. Each student is different. As a teacher, I must realize that and understand that. That kind of understanding and then making learning for the individual student is what I would like to see happening. A lot of time, it is about one content given to everybody and everybody is trying to learn that. That's not the approach I see as the most effective.

Finding an opportunity for learning in every action, in every event that happens in life is how I see online learning.

**Marie: What is your view on interdisciplinary studies for computer science majors?**

Kinshuk: I think that one thing that computer science majors have to understand is that computing is only useful when it is integrated into everything else. Computing on its own is a very narrow mindset. I see integrated studies as a very important component for computer science majors because they really need to understand how computing can help in every other aspect of life. So combining computer with, say, business, arts, history, the natural sciences, all different disciplines, and how computing can help with everything, how computer science can help in providing benefits to every other discipline is very important. So, that's how I see integrated studies. I think it is very important, and I would suggest every computer science major to either think about doing a dual major or having at least minors so that they have direct application in other parts of their life.

**Marie: What would be the majors you would recommend?**

Kinshuk: I think that would not be the right way of thinking. I would suggest to look at what is your aptitude. If you have aptitude for language learning, then computer science and language learning are very good combination. If someone has arts or design aptitude, then design with computer science provides so many opportunities. It makes the understanding better and provides better outcomes. I think it's the aptitude, and it's what is useful in your life.

Again, people have different circumstances. Someone may have to manage their 'family business. That is perfectly fine. Then, have computer science with business, and you get better results out of it. I would not recommend any particular disciplines to be combined with computer science, since it's about the personal situation. Don't think of computer science as the only thing: computer science has to have applications.

**Marie: How do you keep abreast of best teaching practices?**

Kinshuk: I don't know if I do everything I should, but I try my best in different ways. First of all, my personal research is improving learning processes in technology, so I read a lot, discuss with other researchers. We have lots of collaboration, so I try to understand how they do things. I do experiments myself. I have published work with some very experienced colleagues, both in education and computer science. Not just that--we have very strong educators in other disciplines. I do research with others in health discipline, in business, and so on, so I try to find out how they do things. Research, teaching, understanding how others are approaching teaching, and doing experiments myself--through all these different ways, I try to find best practices.

**Marie: What are some of the challenges and highlights to publishing academic literature?**

Kinshuk: I would say none. I don't think there are any challenges. I will take this question from a different point-of-view. What I can say is that when somebody is publishing something, the first thing we need to understand is why are we writing? Writing for myself, I don't need to write. That means, I am writing for other people. I really have to write by understanding what they need and how they can relate to it. I am also editor of the journal I mentioned earlier, and that journal is quite reputable. It is actually one of the top three in the world, according to Google Scholar metrics. There,

I see a lot of research from different parts of the world. In my teaching, I see how my students write. One of the things I've seen too often in all these various venues is that people write either because they are forced to write as that's what is expected of them, or they write to say, this is what I did. The important thing is understand who is going to read, and why would someone read? The readers have to dedicate their time in reading our work, and we have to understand that everybody is busy and their time is precious. So, why would they put the time on reading something that you are writing? Making it relevant to them is very important. Also, that goes for anything else we do. We do this research and a publication comes out, and why would you put so much research into something if nobody needs it? There is the real source of problem. When we write, we need to ask how others can relate to it. Once they can relate, they will be interested in you trying to solve this problem when they have the same problem, too. So, they would like to see how you are trying to solve it. That is the approach we should have, and if we have that approach, then publishing is not a problem at all.

Another thing I would recommend is that research, publishing, any of these things, they don't happen in isolation. They require working with others. They require appreciating what others have done. And, they require working with others to take it to the next level. So collaboration is very important.

**Marie: What is your favorite course to teach?**

Kinshuk: I teach only one course. I love to teach COMP 695. It's a research-based course. It's where I can actually help students develop research skills from day one. Then, I know whatever they do afterwards, they will be successful because they have achieved the attitude towards problem solving so that they will be identifying what are the solutions they should be looking for. They will have open mind when they are doing the research, and they will be following rigorous practices and not going into biased research. That is very important for research. That's why I love this course.

**Marie: If you could confer one piece of wisdom on an upcoming PhD student in computer science, what would it be?**

Kinshuk: First, find a good application for your research so that you can see how your research is going to be useful. If you have that in mind, then whatever research topic you take, it is going to result in very good research. It is going to be useful to society. So, usefulness of research to society, I think that I would say to any research student. It doesn't matter how abstract the research you do is, a lot of research we do is fundamental research, which requires abstract solutions, but at the same time, the application of it, and how it will benefit society should remain at the center of your research.



## The E-Text & E-Reading Debate Continues

Carla Knipe



A sure way to stir up strong opinion among Athabasca students is to mention e-texts. Some students think they are a great idea; others strongly dislike them. Post-secondary institutions throughout North America are increasingly using e-texts, which follows on from the increase in recreational e-reading. I wanted to research the latest statistics regarding e-reading in order to put the e-text debate in a current context, however, the most recent data was difficult to find. Many statistics and articles were from a few years ago; some of latest data from the Pew Research Centre is from 2014 but most is

from earlier years. I found a 2010 study from the University from Saskatchewan that provided lots of background information, but I could not find any recent updates.

Many of the online articles I found contained a cautionary tone warning that e-reading is great and not going away soon, but that printed books should not be abandoned just yet. This is perhaps due in part to the current state of e-reader technology—as well as people maintaining an emotional attachment to printed books.

I contacted the Calgary Public Library, one of the largest library systems in Canada, and a representative provided me with some insight into e-reading via an online chat. She said that The Calgary Public Library jumped on the e-book bandwagon quite early, back in 2007. Since then, its digital collection has become vast, containing more than 61,000 fiction and non-fiction e-books and e-audiobook titles, with new resources added weekly. Checkouts of e-books have nearly doubled each year. However, printed books are still holding their own. Printed materials within the Calgary Public Library system remain a substantial part of library checkouts and she said that other library systems see a similar trend. Public libraries are now being used more as "hubs of learning" rather than places simply to check out books. She could not say whether this was directly down to how the rise in e-reading has affected library culture or whether peoples' overall perceptions of libraries are changing.

But, during my research, I came across several articles from various news sources detailing a development that concerned me. Amazon, the world's largest online bookseller and a major publisher and promoter of e-books and e-reading is planning to change the way it pays writers for electronic content. Instead of paying them based on the purchase of an entire book, it will pay for each digital flip of a page. Rather than treating e-books as a whole entity, the publishing behemoth is fragmenting them page by page. This model can be compared to the number of Facebook likes or re-tweets a social media post gets or how Spotify pays recording artists for songs. Works of literature will be treated as a sort of popularity contest where the metric based on complex algorithms is most important, not the creativity in producing the book.

What this change means in practical terms is if someone purchases an e-book and then does not read it at all—either abandons it, or just flips past the "boring bits"—the writer receives little or no payment.

The entire culture of books and reading is undoubtedly changing because of the Internet and e-reading. Establishing a writing career is difficult enough as it is, and a current debate is whether content mills and blogging may, on the one hand, be an easy way to break into the field, but, at the same time, hinder a writing career because these markets do not pay well, or even at all, which makes a writing career difficult in terms of financial sustainability. Electronic publishing, especially electronic self-publishing, is seen as a middle ground and a boost for writers to take back some control within the environment of technology: to enable them to get paid for their work, and also provide a way to network and establish a platform. The big booksellers, like Amazon, have often come across as big players who champion the little guy through their promotion of e-books, but will this proposed model become yet another hurdle for new writers?

It is too soon to think that Amazon's proposed change will spell the end of the writing and publishing industries altogether because this prediction has always circulated and yet these industries still manage to survive. However, both those who produce and consume culture should be at least slightly concerned about this potential new model. The massive bookselling and media companies are such influencers of culture that smaller firms tend to look to see what they do and then follow their lead.

The field of academic writing and publishing should also pay attention to Amazon's model. It isn't too much of a stretch to hypothesize that if a pay-by-the-page model is adopted by academic publishers and if academic teaching staff use only several chapters out of an e-text, or if editions of academic journals were considered in terms of usage of either the individual articles or pages of articles rather than the entire issue, the academic publishing market may be worse off.

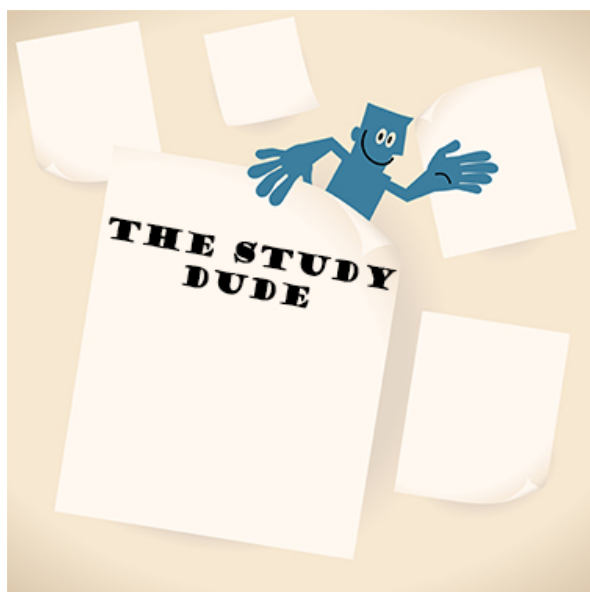
It is clear that the debate between printed books and electronic media will not be resolved soon, or in a tidy way. Some aspects of electronic-based media have undoubtedly enhanced reading experiences, both in the

academic and recreational reading sectors. But predictions regarding where the e-publishing industry will end up, and how that will ultimately affect the culture of reading, seems to be anyone's guess at this point.

#### References

[http://www.usask.ca/secretariat/governing-bodies/council/committee/TLAR/reports\\_archive/e-text-report.pdf](http://www.usask.ca/secretariat/governing-bodies/council/committee/TLAR/reports_archive/e-text-report.pdf)

*Carla Knipe is an AU student living in Calgary and majoring in English*



### 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 make your first sentences punchy.*

*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 peers into the mindset of the journalistic expert, Roy Peter Clark, in his groundbreaking book *Help! For Writers: 210 Solutions to the Problems Every Writer Faces*. Roy appeared on Oprah and many other media channels as his

writing parallels the heights of the iconic language experts, Strunk and White.

#### How to Begin Your Masterpieces

As a student, I often heard the rule that you should start your essays with an interesting quote, an anecdote, a compelling statistic, and so forth, but I never implemented the strategy. One professor proved stingy with giving grades, although she towered over all others in terms of the positive impact she left. My essays received meagre A-minuses from her, and I was often perplexed at what I could have done better. Now, with all of my reading on writing strategies from the pros like Roy Peter Clark, I have better insight into what could have elevated my writing grade to an A-plus.

The first sentence of an essay should be monumental, and Roy Peter Clark presents some strategies for capturing that A-plus at the start of your essay or story:

- Read as many intro sentences and paragraphs as you can get your hands on—particularly the kinds that keep you reading.
- Determine what stands out as most interesting in the story. What strikes a chord as relevant to you personally?
- Pay attention to conflict. Conflict drives good writing.
- Start with the most urgent piece or pieces you need as the foundation for your argument development.
- Put those tidbits that instil an urgency to read your essay at the beginning.
- Determine the top three most important pieces in your writing, and foreshadow at least one at the beginning.

### **What to Do When You Have Too Much Material to Wade Through**

Have you ever had too much research to wade through? Or have you highlighted a million and one points in all the materials you perused with the desire to implement them all? All graduate students have, and many undergraduates do so as well. Yet, we need to narrow our materials for focus.

As an undergraduate, I signed out every book available on the topic I aimed to research. With no regard to who else might need the books, I signed out as much material as my hands could carry. This strategy ensured that I had ample resources for my studies. Plus, zeroing in on the index of the book to get the content of my narrowed topic aided the process of getting the most out of the books in as little time as possible. I also printed off at least fifteen articles, more if I could find relevant ones, and I would rush skim them, highlighting everything that sparked my interest pertaining to the topic I aimed to study. At the same time, I would write a one- or two-word heading beside each highlighted point, categorizing them for later on.

In short, I had so much material that building the outline or creating cue cards proved to be a highly involved task. At some point, I needed to consider a better strategy for dealing with too much information.

Roy Peter Clark overflows with ideas for managing too much material for your essay:

- Start by writing what you know.
- Put three stars beside the very best material, two stars by the next best, and one star by the least best.
- Get three boxes out, and label them as "stuff you want to implement in your paper", "backup", and "stuff you don't intend on using". Categorize your material in these boxes.
- Randomly draft the ten most important things you want to cover in your story, and then reduce this list to five. Make a file for each of the five items. Put notes in the files (cue cards even).
- Make a table of contents or an index to help you think about the major topics in your story or essay
- Maybe start writing on a subtopic that appeals to you rather than from beginning to end. Write what inspires you most at the time you wish to write.
- Use index cards and order them.
- Try drafting your introduction without looking at your notes or index cards or research materials.
- Try to envision a mission statement that takes three things you hope the reader will take from your writing.

### **How to Cut and Edit to Capture Just Your Very Best Material**

I wrote a play once. I wrote half of it using some basic instruction, but it wasn't until the point where the instructor took my scene and cut out the majority of my writing that I came to a turning point. Almost every sentence was snipped by him. What remained consisted of a few telling lines of plot. With that in mind, I scrapped the script, restarted from page one, and wrote only the bare minimum to convey the action. The script thinned, so I added more scenes with increasing tension.

Now, I preach the value of cutting the extraneous from scripts, but I have yet to learn to do so with articles and essays. Murdering your darlings, or cutting your prized sentences, can pain you to do, but the end pay-off is worth it.

With that said, and to avoid a pang of guilt for hypocritically writing anything redundant on this topic, here's what Roy Peter Clark says about editing your material to capture the very best:

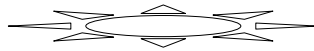
- When you finish your draft, surround the material that works well with brackets. Cut the rest.
- Try to imagine how your reader would respond to your writing. Keep what you think the reader would most appreciate.
- With your bracketed best material, rate each item from one to ten (worst to best) and consider cutting the lower numbers.

- Remember that writing that is embellished with flowery words may not be worthy of inclusion. Consider cutting your darlings.
- The elements that you cut might work in another essay, so consider keeping them in storage.
- When you find a piece of information in your paper that doesn't quite fit, cut it out—even if the info seems intriguing.

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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Clark, Roy Peter. (2011). *Help! For Writers: 210 Solutions to the Problems Every Writer Faces..* New York, NY: Little, Brown and Company.



## Gone Reading: Catching up on Y/A Books

Barbara Lehtiniemi



I was born with a book in my hand. At least it seems that way. I can't remember a time when I wasn't reading. During my youth, I read everything I could get my hands on. I grew up with Laura Ingalls Wilder, Trixie Belden, Nancy Drew, and a host of others that lived and breathed in books. I read by streetlight and by flashlight. Two fingers are permanently bent from holding books open with one hand.

CBC Books recently put out a list of "100 Young Adult Books That Make You Proud to be Canadian." Anticipating a trip down memory lane, I scanned the list for familiar titles. I was

expecting to see dozens. I saw three. Of those three, I had read only two in my youth; the third I read two years ago.

*Anne of Green Gables*, by Lucy Maud Montgomery, I discovered, appropriately, in Charlottetown, PEI. Somehow, I had arrived at the age of eleven—Anne's age—without having heard of her. On a family camping vacation to PEI, a big treat was to attend a performance of *Anne of Green Gables* at the Charlottetown Festival. Despite my crushing disappointment to find that it was a live performance and not a movie, I fell in love with Anne. My mother bought a set of the first three Anne books from a sidewalk vendor after the play. Those copies have been read to tatters. I now have new Anne books, and, almost four decades later, I still read them periodically.

*Lost in the Barrens*, by Farley Mowat, was my introduction to Canada's North, and to Mowat, too. I recall this book was assigned reading in grade seven. The vivid descriptions of the barrens, in particular the effect of snowblindness, stayed with me for many years. I read and re-read *Lost in the Barrens*, but somehow didn't get around to other Mowat titles. That changed around six years ago, when I picked up his autobiographical *Bay of Spirits: A Love Story*. A Mowat-reading binge followed for the next few years, but there are still well-known titles, like *People of the Deer*, that I have yet to read.

*Who Has Seen the Wind*, by W.O. Mitchell is a Canadian classic that I completely missed in my youth. What prompted me to pick it up in my forties I can't recall. It was an enjoyable read, and the perfect antidote to adult stress and worries.

As for the 97 other titles on the CBC young adult list, I believe I'm suffering from bad timing and not neglect. Many of the titles may be destined to become Canadian classics, but most of them weren't around when I was young. The majority were published in the last 10 years; only a handful pre-date the millennium.

Will I read all these books? Not likely. But reading young adult titles, when one is—let's face it—an *old* adult, is a refreshing break from heavy course texts. This summer may just find me lounging with *Harriet's Daughter*, by M. NourbeSe Philip, *The Lynching of Louie Sam*, by Elizabeth Stewart, or *Wondrous Strange*, by Lesley Livingston.

It's summer: gone reading.

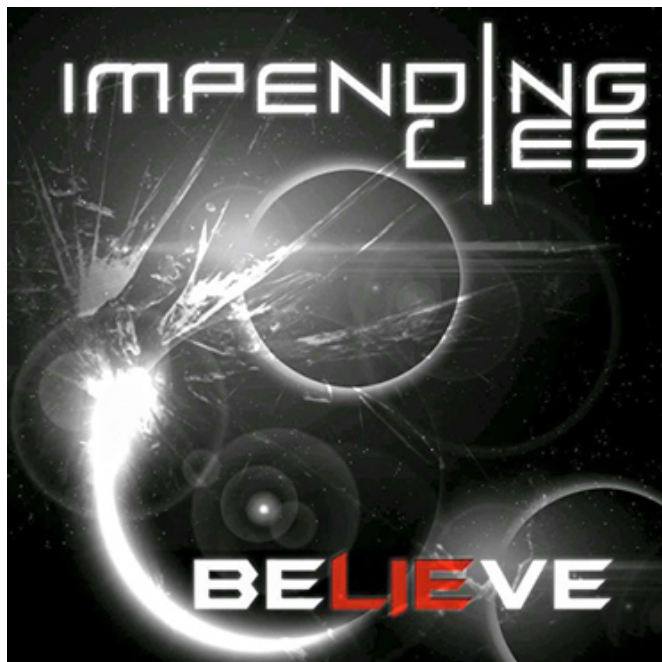
*Barbara Lehtiniemi is a writer, photographer, and AU student. She lives on a windswept rural road in Eastern Ontario. Follow Barbara on twitter @ThereGoesBarb.*



## Music Review

### Believe

**Samantha Stevens**



**EP:** *Believe*

**Band:** Impending Lies

I am always excited to listen to and learn about a new hard rock band. I am always amazed by the sounds that hard rock bands come up with. Some bands have included pianos, violins, and flutes in their songs, which brings the tones and melodies to another dimension, and the genre of hard rock continues to grow. When I was given Impending Lies' latest EP to review, I was thrilled and excited to listen to them, but hesitant as well. What if they didn't live up to my expectations of a hard rock band? Well, I am happy to say that Impending Lies' music is all that I could have hoped for and more.

Founded in 2011 in Cleveland, Ohio, *Believe* is the band's latest release. Over the years Impending Lies has shared

the stage with many outstanding acts like Godsmack, Shinedown, and P.O.D. to name a few. Although their music is typical of the hard rock genre, Impending Lies creates songs that are memorable. The songs on *Believe* will grab your attention and never let go.

The tracks on *Believe* remind me of bands like Finger Eleven, Theory of a Deadman, and Saint Asonia. The music varies from classic rock to hard rock that occasionally crosses the boundary to metal.

"Separate Ways" is a cover of Journey's "Separate Ways" with an added flare. In addition to the sounds that made the original famous, Impending Lies offers fans and listeners a classic song with a metal twist. I am very

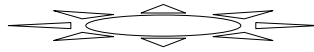
fond of the original song, and I found myself loving this cover because it felt like this song contained everything that should be in a modern rock ballad without ruining the sound. Impending Lies did a fantastic job of paying homage to a classic.

“Let Go” contains more elements of metal than the other tracks on this album. I especially enjoyed how the song begins with an effect that sounds like a scratchy vinyl record. The rest of the track exhibits the typical elements of heavy rock, but the occasional metal vocals stop the song from becoming stagnant. The variety of the singing is the best aspect of this song. At times the singing is rock, other times it becomes bass heavy then it switches to metal. And although the music is great, it is the vocals that are the most prominent element of this track.

The title track “Believe” is, in a word, epic. Beginning with a light touch of electronic effects, this track transcends the typical heavy rock song. The lyrics are stunning, the music is upbeat but uniquely dark, and the overall harmony is beyond anything that I have ever heard before. I absolutely love this song.

*Believe* is a fantastic EP and I highly recommend it to lovers of classic and hard rock, and metal. *Believe* and Impending Lies previous EP *The Storm* can be found on iTunes and in the band’s online [store](#).

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



## In Conversation

### With Marlow Grey, Part II

**Wanda Waterman**



*Marlowe Grey is an alternative band based in Brooklyn, known for passionate vocal expression, sensitive soundscapes, and meticulous songwriting. They've just released "[Sugar Plum Fairy](#)," a preview track from their EP, *Midnight in Brooklyn*, which will be released this fall. The band will be following the EP with an LP in the next year.*

*Says the band's singer, songwriter, and guitarist Anthony John Pietro the song's title refers to old Beatles bootlegs in which John Lennon would start his takes by saying "sugar plum fairy, sugar plum fairy," instead of the traditional*

*"one-two, one-two."*

*Recently Pietro took the time to answer Wanda Waterman's questions about songwriting, the new EP, and the inspirational power of *The Big Apple*.*

**Your band is definitely a motley crew in terms of taste, training, and style. How do you make all that come together?**

We make it up as we go. We have no idea what we're doing or how to be a successful, sustaining, established rock band with a twenty-year career (which is what we're shooting for). We're just working hard, being as

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practical as possible, and respecting one another tremendously. We are all different, however we all come from similar backgrounds and families.

**What's the formula for the songs you create?**

They have to have a feel. All the chords have been played. All the melody has been written. The voice and emotion, for me, is all that's left to vary with music today.

**What do you love best about your new EP, *Midnight in Brooklyn*?**

It tells a story. The EP takes place around a single evening in New York and passes through different cultural aspects of the city. The listener is taken for a bit of a ride sonically.

**The title of your new single, "Sugar Plum Fairy," was inspired by John Lennon, who repeated this name at the start of a recording (instead of the usual "one, two, one, two"). Did he ever say why he did that?**

I've read a handful of books on Lennon and during that time (The Beatles circa 1965) he was clearly torn between their success and the drag of their success. He never spoke about "sugar plum fairy" from what I've read, however I get the sense that he was really trying to keep his humor and wittiness through all the stress, pressure, and chaos.

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

Haha . . . that's a secret.

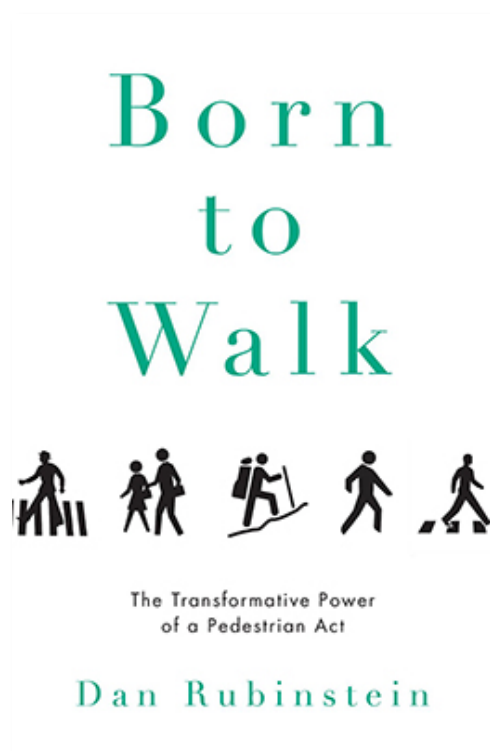
**What influence has Brooklyn, or New York in general, had on the development of your sound?**

New York, and Brooklyn in particular, has had an incredible influence on our sound. Everything happens here. There's a ton of culture around and there are so many stories that are crazy to hear (from friends, experiences, etc.) and write about.

It's also pretty darn safe, the city, and visually stunning of course, yet the powers that be are really trying to use some of the very limited space to create as much nature as possible for us. So yeah, you gotta hop on a subway to get to Brooklyn Bridge Park (which is gorgeous), or to the Highline or Central Park, but it's really worth it when you get there!

*(to be continued)*

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



## The Mindful Bard Born to Walk

Wanda Waterman

Tramps Like Us, Baby,  
We Were Born to Walk

**Book:** *Born to Walk: The Transformative Power of a Pedestrian Act*

**Author:** Dan Rubinstein

"Slow down, you're movin' too fast.  
You got to make the morning last.  
Just kicking down the cobblestones,  
Looking for fun and feelin' groovy."  
- Paul Simon and Art Garfunkel

"The path to happiness—and deep down we all know this—is created by love, and being kind to oneself, sharing a sense of community with others, becoming a participant instead of a spectator, and being in motion. "  
- Michael Moore

In the early eighties iconic folksinger Art Garfunkel decided to get walking. He eventually walked across the United States (not all at once, of course) in a series of jaunts, and, in 1997, commemorated this walk with an album called *Across America*.

Why should Garfunkel and hordes of likeminded bipeds hit the roads, paths, and trails, stay there for a dog's age, and, on returning home, immediately start making plans for the next walking trip?

Short answer: it feels good, on so many levels. Walking is not only one of the most natural and necessary of human behaviours and an essential part of our DNA since Opening Day, it's good for our bodies, our minds, our work, our creativity, our environments, our families, and our societies.

Ottawa-based journalist, writer, editor, and walker, Dan Rubinstein, started walking to heal a knee injury, but the joy he experienced was so great that he quit his job and embarked on his own hero journey: a quest to find out all he could about the value of walking. He explored urban, rural, and wild terrains, took part in a religious pilgrimage in Wales, joined the foot patrols of Philadelphia police, took a hike with a First Nations doctor in northern Quebec, and walked with Scottish groups promoting mental health.

Rubinstein had a fabulous time gathering both hard and experiential evidence to back up the obvious truth that walking is a good idea. He travelled throughout the Americas, Great Britain, and Canada, joining the ranks of people who had seen their lives and environments transformed by the simple act of putting one foot in front of the other.

What did he discover? With all the progress, humanity has lost an important piece of itself. The sedentary, virtual reality, hothouse flower existence in which the industrialised world imprisons us is not only severely

limiting, it's life threatening. Regular walking reduces stress, depression, anxiety, and anger and can slow the progress of Alzheimer's. It can make us more creative and help us to problem-solve. It saves the environment from carbon emissions, and improves friendships and family relationships.

The most important chapter for mindful bards might be Chapter 6, the chapter on walking and creativity. The authors talk about art projects that incorporate walking.

"We want to create an ongoing poetic exchange with the places people live in and visit," says curator Todd Shalom, organiser of "participatory art walks" at Elastic City in New York.

According to these creative types the highest and simplest means of learning about the world is to walk through it. History backs this up; films, novels, songs, performance art, graphic art have long been created on the subject walking and been inspired by it. Literature has many examples of how walking engages intellectuals and artists. Poet William Wordsworth and his sister Dorothy and their friends enjoyed long intellectually rich discussions on their many forays into England's Lake District.

Rubinstein encounters artists who've made art out of their walking habit, not just performance art but art whose construction requires the covering of many miles on foot. The artists he interviews report that the experience of walking not only enhances their understanding of the natural world, it gives them a deeper appreciation for the beauty—even sacredness—of simple, common things.

Walking is also a traditional spiritual experience especially, in the form of meditative walking, or pilgrimage. Buddhists do a walking meditation, Muslims walk seven times around the Kabbah when they make the pilgrimage to Mecca, and in the Kumbh Mela Hindus make a pilgrimage to enter a sacred river. "Peace Pilgrims" embark on long walks in a compassionate response to suffering and a desire to draw attention to injustice. All these pilgrims report an experience of profound fellowship with their walking companions.

There's only time, pollution, materialism, and stress to lose. There's deep thought, fitness, health, tranquility, serenity, creativity, and money saved to gain. So put on your walking shoes.

*Born to Walk* manifests eight of the Mindful Bard's criteria for books well worth reading.

- It's authentic, original, and delightful.
- It poses and admirably responds to questions that have a direct bearing on my view of existence.
- It's about attainment of the true self.
- It inspires an awareness of the sanctity of creation.
- It displays an engagement with and compassionate response to suffering.
- It gives me artistic tools.
- 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.

*This article owes much to the indispensable research assistance of Bill Waterman.*

*Many thanks to the research assistance of Bill Waterman.*

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

## Do as I Say, Not as I Do

Deanna Roney



I have been busy reorganizing and refreshing our home. When I do that I like to have some background noise and will usually throw on a movie. Nothing too good, as it will suck me in and I will end up watching the movie instead of getting the task at hand done. So yesterday it was *Confessions of a Shopaholic*, being a shopaholic is something I cannot relate to, but the main character was also a writer so I figured it would be mildly entertaining background noise.

The main character, "Becky" ends up writing for a financial magazine and yet is wildly deep in debt and being stalked by a debt collector. While she is able to give sound financial advice, she is unable to take her own words and apply them to her life. This made me think that maybe it is a trait of writers, able to give sound advice, but often unable to heed it; maybe this goes beyond writers, but, as writers, we have the evidence in black and white.

I am guilty of this myself. I have written articles about enjoying the journey and not getting too caught up in the final product; I wrote an article about staying organized and utilising that planner I order every year from Athabasca's student union. When I wrote these I had every intention of following through with my own advice, it was written after deciding that these were the things which were going to make my progress through my degree easier, and more enjoyable.

Of course, these were short lived. My planner soon went back into disuse and I started looking forward again to the end goal, focusing on being finished at a certain time rather than making sure I was absorbing the information from the courses. Each course I started I would be excited about, until the next one was on order. Then I couldn't wait to start that one. And so the trend went. I recently dusted off my planner to help me get through a particularly tough assignment, not tough because it was exceptionally hard, but because I was getting to be pretty talented at avoiding it.

I wondered at why it is that I, and "Becky", and I am sure others, are able to see what *should* be done, but are unable to follow our own words. Perhaps it is because we have taken the other path and can see what it is that path leads to and want to warn others from it. "Becky" could give great financial advice because she knew everything on the other end of the spectrum, she knew what not to do. Just like when I wrote those articles I knew what not using a planner was doing to my stress level and I knew what giving myself a possibly unrealistic deadline was doing to me. I knew neither of these things were beneficial to my progress and, if anything, hindered me from achieving my goal. I could see what not to do, because I was living it. It can be incredibly hard to break a habit, and a learning style, or shopping style, is a habit. While it can be difficult to change our ways, we are able to see the wrong in what we are doing, able to see that there is a better path: even if we are unable to stay on that path.

Knowing what should be done and doing it are different and challenging tasks. Often the easier of the two is knowing what should be done. Sticking to a plan, yet maintaining flexibility in that plan; forcing yourself not to have a rigid plan is not the easiest task. Even though, in the end, it makes life simple and more enjoyable; it can be hard to turn that voice off inside your head telling you to stay on the path you are on, to not be tempted by the other path –which may look smoother and more enjoyable.

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

## Student Sizzle AU's Hot Social Media Topics

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

Not every AU student is on summer vacation! Many students continue their studies through the summer and keep connected through social media.

### **AUSU Student Forums**

In the By-Election 2015 forum, Philip gets the ball rolling by announcing his intention to run for council, and inviting questions and comments.

### **AthaU Facebook Group**

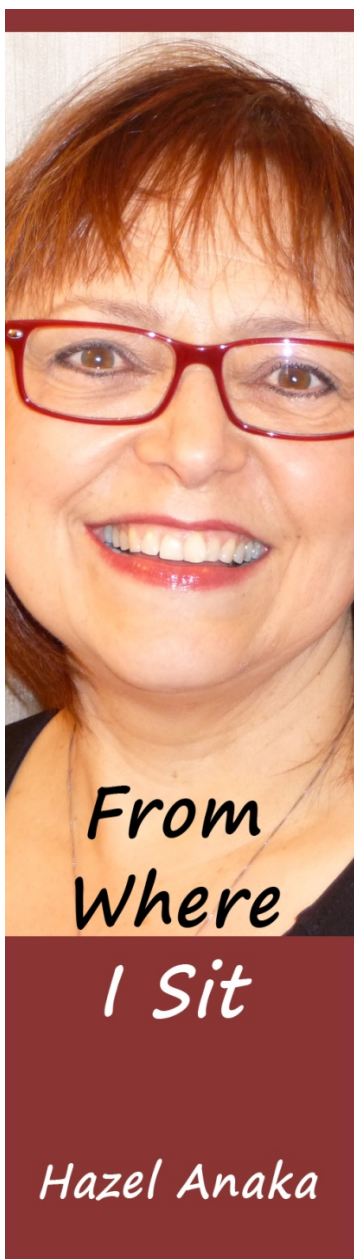
Kristin posts her exuberance at passing the last exam she needs to graduate. Meanwhile, Jessica feels much the same way reaching the halfway mark in her studies.

Other posts include Lynda courses, Degree Works (or not), course extensions, and courses EDUC 310, HRMT 326, MATH 215, and POLI 311.

### **Twitter**

@AthabascaUSU (AUSU) tweets: "If you're a Student Aid Alberta or OSAP student, you can use Aeroplan points to pay tuition! <http://ow.ly/QiojJ> ," and "Find great tools and awards for Aboriginal Students with Universities Canada at <http://ow.ly/QiDmd> [#abpse](#) [#cdnpse](#)."





## Worth the Effort

With so many people hating their jobs and their bosses, I count myself lucky. With so many people simply putting in time and counting down the days until they 'find something better', or retire, or win the lottery, I count myself lucky. With so many people not understanding the big picture of job satisfaction and the warm glow of meaningful contribution, I count myself lucky.

Too many people are stuck doing (or choose to do) something they hate or that makes them physically sick. The reasons are many: it pays well, it's easy, it's expected, it's safer than making the leap to something better, it pleases a parent or spouse, it's all they can get.

As the coordinator for a successful two-day festival I think I have the best job ever. For a personality like mine that resists the boring routine of a nine-to-five, forty-five-year career grind, this is perfect. I am sufficiently (and then some) challenged. This keeps my days interesting and my mind sharp. It requires all of my current skills (and then some). This keeps me learning and growing. It affords me freedom to get the job done and achieve the desired results without micro-management by a boss or a board. Of course, I'm accountable and, of course, I ask for input, but the day-to-day how-to of getting to the finish line is my own decision.

How and when I work is also my choice. That may mean working when the rest of the world is sleeping or at the beach or enjoying a long weekend. It may also mean taking the day off when family time or something special beckons. It also allows me to pack a laptop and work at locations other than my home office. Of course, a home office comes with its own perks and challenges. Working in pj's is a perk; not being able to shut down is a challenge.

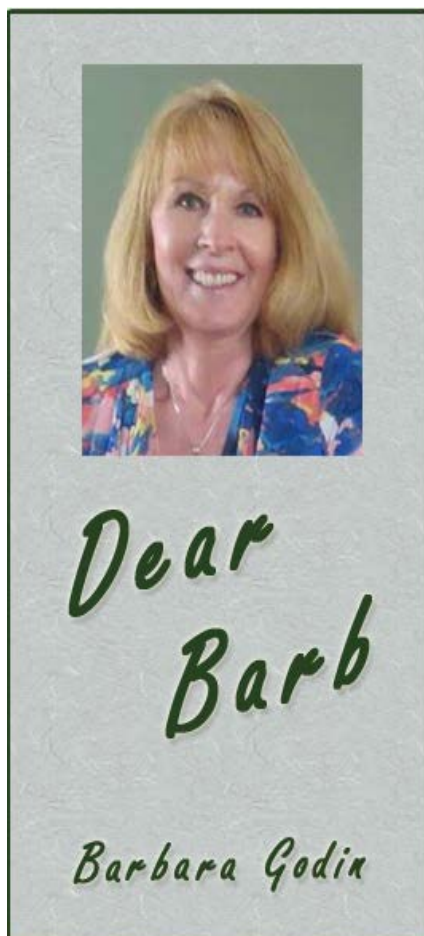
With less than three weeks to the festival, I'm on the home stretch. Appearing on TV is my least favourite but necessary part of the job. The artsy, creative part of me loves making centerpieces and designing on a dime for the venue. Still to be

done is painting twelve vinyl panels for the poppy theme. Using found objects like birch branches and re-using parts of previous year's supplies test my ingenuity.

Matching volunteers and jobs, organizing a work bee, planning the two-day hall set-up, and executing it all is a bit like putting together a puzzle. I love the challenge of making a work plan, assembling all the component pieces, creating the documents and forms, recruiting the right people, and getting the desired results. I know that past experience and lessons learned means not re-inventing the wheel. Thinking on my feet to solve new problems or create new aspects of the festival comes with the territory.

That's why I believe finding the right job for you is worth the effort, from where I sit.

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



## Relative Issues

**Dear Barb:**

*My younger brother is in his twenties and is wasting his life. He works sporadically at dead end jobs. He has no initiative or ambition. He doesn't even care about his appearance, as when he goes for a job interview he doesn't dress appropriately and his hair is halfway down his back. I have been trying to talk to my parents about him and they say just leave him alone, he will come around eventually. I think they are enabling him since they are always lending him money, which he never repays. When he asks me to borrow money, I refuse as I work too hard for my money to give it to him. I paid my own way through college and now I have a good job. I suspect he may be into drugs, but I don't know for sure. I love my brother and want him to have a better life, but I don't know what I can do to help him. I would appreciate any advice you could offer. Thanks Mark*

Hi Mark:

Thanks for your question. Unfortunately there is not a lot you can do to help your brother, except to offer him support and encouragement. If he has a drug problem, he is the only one who can seek help. Also it sounds like he may have some depression as well. Perhaps your parents know more about the situation than you and that is why they are being so tolerant. Have you talked to your brother as a friend, not as an older brother who is trying to fix his life? People often tend to be more open to an accepting and supportive friend. On the other hand, this may be the life your brother has chosen for

himself, if that is the case, you will just have to let him be and accept him as he is. Good Luck Mark.

**Dear Barb:**


*Love your column, read it every week. I have just completed my degree and landed a good job. I have been away at school, but recently I moved back home temporarily until I can get some money saved up. The problem is my parent's home is a pigsty. I don't remember them being this bad when I lived at home. The dishes are piled up in the sink for days, the floors are so sticky you can hardly walk on them and I don't think they have vacuumed for months. Sometimes I start cleaning hoping my mom will join in and help, but she just sits around watching TV, so I figure why bother. Is there anything I can do about this, or should I just let them be? Katie*

Hello Katie, congrats on obtaining your degree, that's quite an accomplishment! People are unique and what may appear neat and clean to one may not be to another. Ultimately it is up to your parents how they chose to live, whether that is neat and tidy or messy and dirty. It is their home and up to them how they manage it. However if it really bothers you, perhaps for a special occasion you could present them with a gift certificate from a home cleaning service. Perhaps when they see how much better their home looks after being cleaned they may be motivated to maintain it. Hope this helps, thanks Katie.

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

# Overheard

## BARE BREAST AWARENESS



I'm so lucky to have such a faithful, modest girlfriend as you, Agnes!

Thanks, Brad! You know, I could never be like my friend Shirley. She actually attended the Bare Breast Awareness rally yesterday. She wanted me to go, but I do NOT let my puppies out in public.

Shirley, eh?  
Where does she live?  
And when can we meet her for coffee?

WRITTEN BY WANDA WATERMAN



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## AUSU By-Election

The candidate for the 2015 AUSU By-election are posted! Good luck to the following candidates *(listed in alphabetical order by last name)*:

- Tegan Paige Davidson
- Colleen Doucette
- Sheldon Fougere
- Taylor Stephanie Haahr
- Wendy Elaine John-Haggerty
- Philip Kirkbride
- Catherine Manten
- Taneisha Jordan Mckenzie
- Madeline Hudson Mogk
- Pierre Plamondon
- Tamra Ross
- Brandon Simmons
- Mark Swarek
- Jennifer Terry
- Laura Zhu

Check out the AUSU [website](#) for more information about the candidates or check out our [2015 by-election forum](#) to post questions for the candidates!

**The voting period will run August 21 to August 24, 2015.** The ballots will be emailed to all subscribed AUSU members.

For more information visit the AUSU [website](#).

Please direct any inquiries to [cro@ausu.org](mailto:cro@ausu.org).

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## IMPORTANT DATES

- Aug 5- 24: AUSU By-election campaign period
- Aug 10: Last day to register for courses starting Sept 1
- Aug 21-24: General Election Voting Period
- Sept 9: AUSU Council Meeting
- Sept 10: Last day to register for courses starting Oct 1

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## AUSU Mobile App Coming Soon!

The app will let you link up your AU classes and schedule study time, as well as connect with other AU students through campus and classroom forums and one-on-one chat. It will have lots of information right at your fingertips, such as services, links, events, important dates, deadlines, and more!

For more info visit our [website](#).



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## New Mental Health Program

AUSU's new Student Lifeline Mental Health & Wellness program is set to launch **September 1, 2015**. This new program includes 24/7 counselling, crisis support, and health & wellness resources to help you with your life, health, family, work and money, including community support and online programs. There is also a live chat feature and a mobile app to access the program through your phone.

For more information visit our [website](#).  
<http://www.ausu.org/services/smartdraw.php>

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# CLASSIFIEDS

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

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## THE VOICE

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