

THE VOICE

MAGAZINE

Vol 23 Issue 33 2015-08-14

Minds We Meet

Interviewing Barbara Lehtiniemi

Significance or Seduction

The Choice is Up to You

The Art of Procrastination

Not Doing It Right

Plus:

Beyond the Book Club

Course Exam: WGST 422

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**Karl Low****Student Funding Back in the News**

This week, the International News Desk is back with a couple of stories about student funding. It reminds me of a very long time ago when I was doing the Fed Watch column for *The Voice Magazine*. That column died out partially because I moved on to doing other things, but largely because government action when it came to post-secondary education essentially dried up.

I'm hopeful that the attention that student funding is getting in Newfoundland and the United States signals another shift in society back to valuing education for education's sake once again, rather than just as a means to further commercialization of our economy.

Here in Canada, the long campaign chosen by the CPC government has some advantages for education. Notably that it means politicians will be campaigning as parents are trying to get their kids ready to head off to college and university. Justin Trudeau has already announced a plan to put money toward educating aboriginal children, and we wait to see if the NDP or Conservatives will follow suit with their own plans to benefit

education. As it will be a top of mind issue for many parents, I expect both parties will soon have something to present.

Meanwhile, here at *The Voice Magazine*, Minds We Meet interviews our own Barbara Lehtiniemi, and she follows that up with her own article about the upcoming AUSU elections, blatantly titled to try to bring traffic into it. I applaud her attempt, and it will be interesting to see what the statistics on it come back as.

We also have a Course Exam, this time by Bethany Tynes, who gives us a closer look at Women's and Gender Studies 422, a course about violence toward women around the globe. Personally, I think it's a sign of a failure in our society that such a course even exists, and even more so that there's enough material to create such a course in the first place. The article, however, goes a good way toward explaining why you might want to take the course, and some of the challenges you can expect if you do. Worth a look if you're considering it or looking for a social science course to round out your degree. And don't miss The Fit Student this week, especially if you're gearing up to finishing some courses before the regular post-secondary year starts in September. The advice on handling pressure might be just what you need to take on your exams.

Jason Sullivan returns with a new Fly on the Wall, this week looking at links between truth, the construction of identity, the role of society in both, and exactly how The Beatles tie into it all. It's a challenging column, and not our usual fare, but that's part of why I like it. I hope that you do as well.

Of course, we still have our selection of reviews of music, film, and books, plus Primal Numbers looks at the technology of noise protection, Carla Knipe looks beyond the book club, and Deanna Roney takes on one of my favorite topics, procrastination. Her article looks at how to make it work for you. Although I have to wonder, if you're making procrastination work, aren't you doing it wrong?

At any rate, enjoy the read!

A stylized, handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Karl'.

MINDS WE MEET



Barbara Lehtiniemi is an AU student living in rural North Glengarry, east of Ottawa, Ontario. After a lengthy career in finance, Barbara has switched gears to become a student and a writer. Barbara is in AU's Bachelor of General Studies program.

The Voice Magazine easily tracked Barbara down: she's a freelance contributor to the magazine. Barb usually conducts the student interviews for this series, but this time we turned the tables and interviewed her. Here's what she had to say about school, hiking, and writing.

Whereabouts do you live? And where are you from originally?

I live in North Glengarry, at the extreme eastern point of Ontario. I've only been in this area five years, having lived most of my life in southwestern Ontario.

Which program are you in at AU? Describe the path that led you there.

I'm in the Bachelor of General Studies program. I originally planned to do a BA in English, but the BGS program allowed me to utilize a lot more transfer credits from college courses I've taken over the years, which were mainly in finance. I worked for decades in finance, but had never gone to university.

When I sort-of retired from my financial career, I decided to go back to school. I was accepted at Carleton University in Ottawa but they wouldn't grant any credit for previous studies. In the end, I decided that online studies at AU fit my needs far better than commuting over 100 kilometres to Ottawa.

What do you like to do in your leisure time?

Reading is my favourite past-time and I never get enough time to read as much as I'd like. I also enjoy walking down woodland trails in summer and cross-country skiing in winter.

What happens after you finish your education?

No idea, really. I've made no plans, nor have I given it much thought. Life will reveal itself it due course. I hope.

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

I've just always had an insatiable thirst for knowledge. Even as a child, I read everything I could get my hands on. I was one of those weird kids that liked to read encyclopedias and dictionaries. Now I'm one of those weird adults that likes poring over college and university course calendars to see what courses I can take.

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

Julia Child. First of all, it would be a great meal (assuming she did the cooking.) Second, it would be interesting to hear how she went from being a non-cook to one of the best-known cooks worldwide. I don't enjoy cooking, so I'm hoping some of her enthusiasm and expertise will rub off on me.

Describe your experience with online learning so far.

Overall I would say it's been great. The flexibility to study when it suits me really works well. I usually work on my courses in the morning but when conditions are great for skiing, for example, I can drop everything and ski and then study in the afternoon. The downside to online learning is that it is more demanding. Although you have a tutor you can call on, you're mostly on your own and you really have to work harder than you would in a classroom setting.

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

Not since I began at AU. I feel I'm finally on the right path. Ever since I left high school, I've felt that my education was unfinished business. I began working right out of high school. Eventually I started taking evening courses at college to help me in my career. Each course I took really stimulated my mind but eventually I had all the finance courses I needed. Now, I'm expanding my mind in different directions, taking English, history, philosophy, and psychology courses. I feel I'm on the path I should have been on all along.

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

I've enjoyed most of my AU courses. So far, HUMN 309, *Ancient Greece*, stands out as the most enjoyable. There was a lot going on in Greece in a relatively short span of time that has had enduring repercussions through the ages.

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

The greatest feeling of accomplishment came when I completed a four-day, 140-kilometre hike on the Bruce Trail. The first day covered 40 kilometres and I had never hiked more than 25 kilometres in a day before. I think there was more mental than physical preparation. I just had to convince myself that I would finish the hike, no matter what. I was pretty much toast at the end of four days, but I was still on my own two feet.

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

Just the time. Spending time on school works means less time available for earning money, spending time with family, or enjoying the outdoors.

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

Let me start by saying that you couldn't pay me enough to be the president of AU! I think my first project would be to review the current funding models for education and start campaigning for changes. Since the funding comes from the province, there's inadequate funding to cover all AU students. AU is a unique institution which needs a unique—or at least unconventional—funding model. Just like being at the forefront of online studies, AU is well-placed to be at the forefront in breaking the mold for funding models. Since students come from all over, I think the funding needs to, too—it's not just an Alberta university.

Describe your favourite sound.

A soft wind rustling through leaves.

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

Swiss army knife with corkscrew attachment, a case of red wine, and my Kobo. I'm not sure what happens after the wine is gone and the Kobo battery is dead.

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

You never know what's around the corner. Tough times are awful but they seldom last. Something unexpectedly wonderful could happen tomorrow which changes everything.

What do you think about e-texts?

I'm avoiding them. I know that I absorb information better from traditional texts, even though sometimes an e-text would be more convenient. I'm glad that AU has put a hold on converting courses to e-text. Right now, I only select courses with traditional texts—I want to get those courses done first before they too get converted. There are a few psychology courses I've been putting off taking because they have e-text; if I get to them, I will probably purchase the textbook.

How do you find communications with your course tutors?

Okay, for the most part. Most respond quickly to queries, and most mark assignments promptly. If I don't get a response in an appropriate span of time, I contact them again. It's what they're there for. And I always ask about the exam. Most tutors have given helpful study tips for the exam that I wouldn't have had unless I'd asked.

Where has life taken you so far?

Many wonderful places! I've been across Canada to the east and west coasts several times, and as far north as Iqaluit. To the south I've been to Cuba and St Lucia in the Caribbean, and I've been to a dozen or so of the United States. I've visited Iceland and the Azores, and I've been to Great Britain, Norway, Sweden, Finland, and Denmark.

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

I always have several books on the go, mostly non-fiction. Right now I'm reading, among others, *In the Shadows of the Morning* by Philip Caputo, and *The Murder Stone* by Louise Penny. I'm also reading *Mission Life in Cree-Ojibwe Country* by Elizabeth Bingham Young and E Ryerson Young, which I downloaded for free from [AU Press](#).

Final question: you've been a regular contributor to *The Voice* for a while, how has that experience been?

It's been great! There is no downside. By writing regular articles for *The Voice*, I get writing experience, publication credits, and I get paid. On top of that, covering some of the council meetings for the magazine has made me a more engaged student; I'm much more aware of what's going on at AU and AUSU now. Even better, since I conduct most of the student interviews for the magazine, I get to talk with students from all over. Writing for *The Voice* has really enhanced my AU experience.

Primal Numbers Noise Pollution

S.D. Livingston



It might be the sounds of traffic, or that speakerphone in the next cubicle, or even your own MP3 player. Whatever the source, modern humans are bombarded by noise all day and, sometimes, all night. You might think that it's just an annoyance, but research shows that noise pollution affects your mental and physical health in surprising ways—and could even cause a drop in your grades.

Noise is nothing new. Not even the earliest humans lived in a world of complete silence. There has always been the sound of the wind in the trees, birdsong, animal noises, waves lapping. But modern noise pollution is

something completely different. As the Franklin Institute [reports](#), in 2001 the U.S. Census Bureau reported that 138 million Americans were "regularly exposed to noise levels labeled as excessive by the Environmental Protection Agency."

But just because a noise isn't loud enough to cause hearing loss doesn't mean it's not a danger to your health. As this *Scientific American* [article](#) notes, chronic, low-level noise pollution can be a major culprit behind our fractured attention spans. The effect is two-fold. First, the constant white noise of modern life causes a stress reaction and the release of cortisol. Too much cortisol "impairs function in the prefrontal cortex," our brain's reasoning and planning centre.

Second, the stress of noise pollution affects another brain chemical, dopamine, by lowering it. Since dopamine controls information flow, the stress of noise pollution "may decrease higher brain function, impairing learning and memory."

So if you like studying with the TV or iPod on, you could very well be doing your grades more harm than good.

But what if you're not the source of that white noise? How do you take what science is saying about noise pollution and mitigate the barrage of sound in your own life? There are a few ways, and commercial products are catching up to our need for a bit more quiet.

At home the options are fairly simple—though hardly fashionable. You can always clap on a pair of industrial earmuffs, which work great but are bulky.

There are also lots of options in disposable or multi-use earplugs, from foam to plastic flanged. Be aware, though, that unless you install them right you won't get anywhere near the noise-reduction rating (NRR) on the package. That's because ear canals come in all different shapes and sizes, and generic earplugs won't be a perfect fit for everyone. You can increase their effectiveness by following directions, and this [video](#) from the Howard Leight brand is just one of many that explain how it's done.

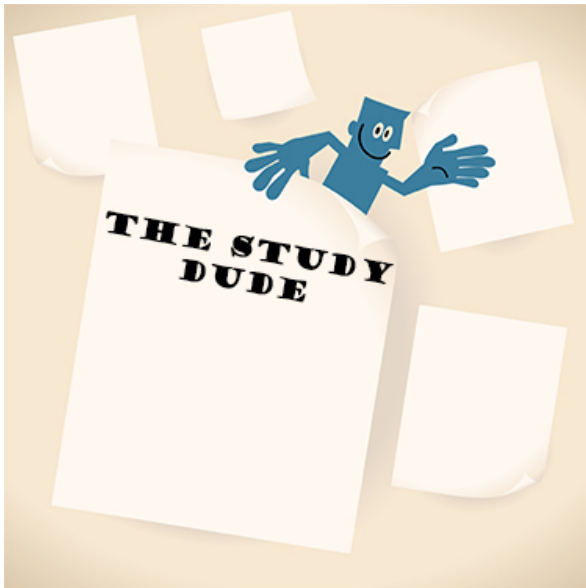
The ultimate, though, is custom-molded earplugs. Done by an audiologist or other hearing professional, a mold is made of your ear canal. The molds are shipped off to the manufacturer and custom earplugs arrive about a week later. The beauty of custom plugs is that, unlike disposables, they don't rely on pressure to block out sound. When done right they fit your ear canal perfectly, and many users claim they don't feel them at all (this [video](#) shows just how low-profile they are).

In Canada, a set of custom earplugs costs about a hundred and fifty dollars. With a typical product lifespan of five or six years, that works out cheaper than buying disposables. One caveat: some companies offer do-it-yourself mold kits, but be careful. Making an earplug mold involves inserting a small foam block deep inside the ear canal to protect the eardrum. I don't know about you, but that's something I'd rather leave to a professional.

Another benefit to custom plugs? They can be solid, vented to allow conversation, and come in models for sleep. You can even get custom molds with an opening to slip your earbuds into, blocking out background noise and allowing you to lower the volume on your phone or MP3 player.

If you're lucky enough to live in a peaceful, rural atmosphere, the news about noise pollution will probably go in one ear and out the other. But for the millions of people who try to work or study while bathed in the non-stop hum of white noise, hearing protection might be just what the doctor ordered for stress reduction and improved memory. And who knows? You might just find turning down the sound helps you turn up your grades.

S.D. Livingston is the author and creator of the Madeline M. Mystery Series for kids, as well as several books for older readers. Visit her [website](#) for information on her writing.



Study Tips from a Semi-Anonymous Friend Help! For Writers

There is nothing more that the Study Dude wants than for you to master the craft of revision.

Well, in these articles, as The Study Dude, I'll try to give you the study tips you need to help make your learning easier. I'll also give you straight and honest opinions and personal anecdotes—even the embarrassing ones that you wouldn't ever dare read about from any other study tip guru.

This week's article probes the mindset of the nonfiction writing expert, Roy Peter Clark, in his book *Help! For Writers: 210 Solutions to the Problems Every Writer Faces*. The final article for

the three part Study Dude series on Roy Peter Clark concludes today.

Never Again Miss a Deadline

Why should you not miss a deadline? Well, I once held a film screening of a Louise Hay movie in a local theatre. I love managing events, having succeeding at event coordination in a number of past projects. Yet, my world view changed dramatically around the time just before the film screening, when I spent the core of my time

focused on more important events like thesis writing, relocation, and other life urgencies. This lack of focus resulted in my missing the deadline for filling up an audience at the screening.

Nonetheless, I contacted a psychic to partake in the presentation of the film screening with the hopes that she would talk about, well, psychic things, especially those pertaining to how our psychology is linked to our physical health. (I wouldn't consult a psychic today, however, due to my spiritual development, but back then it seemed appealing.) The psychic delighted in the opportunity, and agreed to present to the crowd.

But a crowd did not arrive. My focus waned, and the day of the screening came with very little effort or forethought on my part. In advance of the screening, I advised the psychic to watch the show only as I anticipated a low turn-out. True to my word, the audience hardly manifested, leaving most seats empty. Even worse, the media came out, and filmed me on stage talking to a paltry audience interspersed throughout vacated rows. I tried to avoid the media once the tears started to flow, and I hid my face, sobbing. I advised the camera person to avoid crowd shots and instead take close-ups of people's faces.

So, that is why you don't want to miss a deadline.

Roy Peter Clark presents some sage advice on how to never miss a deadline:

- Attempt to find your story or essay focus as soon as possible. You don't have to commit to this particular focus, but instead let the research guide your ultimate focus direction
- Your ability to choose your best material from your research depends on your focus.
- If you don't have enough support for your position, go back to the research and find what you need to make an argument, even if your argument changes.
- If your deadline is a month away, set an earlier deadline of two to three weeks away. Always try to set a pseudo-deadline well in advance of the actual deadline.
- When you make lots of progress, don't take time off. Keep on that essay like a dog on a bone.
- If you write at least one page every single day, you will have written a book every year.
- Make your revision as early as time allows.
- Celebrate at every pivotal moment of your essay writing. (First draft done? Go celebrate).

Learn How To Revise Your Paper

In undergraduate studies, I would start collecting books for a research paper the day the assignment was handed out. I would collect reams of books and gather numerous journal articles. Once I located my materials, I would begin researching with either cue cards or an outline in Microsoft Word's outline option of the Document View tab. Once the compiled quotes created roughly the size of the paper assigned, I would begin drafting the article.

I aimed to finish the first rough draft within two to three weeks of the due date. This way, I could read and reread the paper, making corrections and adjustments along the way or returning to the literature to fill in the gaps as needed. By the time I submitted the paper, the document was void of errors. An A grade demands error free documents.

Now, writing for The Voice, I can submit a document with some errors and know the editor will catch any little mishap. Not only does he catch errors, but he also helps polish my understanding of English in the process. If only academics could have it so good. (In a future article, I will explore strategies for self-editing and for feedback-soliciting.)

For those of you self-reliant on your revisions, Roy Peter Clark has some sage tips on how to revise your drafts:

- "Revise at every stage of the writing process" (p. 245).
- Revise everything, including your prior revisions.
- Before making your first draft, make a zero draft in which you write down everything you know and determine what you need yet to learn.
- Don't shy away from finding and accepting criticism. Go talk to your teacher prior to and after you have done your research.
- Reading work aloud enables you to find your best possible writing voice.
- Print your essay or story and write in the margins of each paragraph the topic of the paragraph. This helps you cut and paste related items.
- Always double check your facts and statistics. Accuracy yields higher grades. Check mark every fact that you have proven to be accurate.

Select Your Very Best and Trash the Rest

As a young teenager, I often played Dungeons and Dragons with my brother, who won an acting award. He served as the dungeon master. Inspired by the creativity of it all, I wrote a story in junior high based on one of the games we played. My teacher loved it so much that she read it aloud to the class over a several week time frame.

The beginning of the story started beautifully, but grew more amateurish as the story progressed. I ended up inserting a lot of references to "undigested juices" as a lazy man's way to ramp up the humour, and my teacher asked me in front of the class, "Why do you keep bringing up undigested juices?" Everyone laughed. Cockily, I told her I thought it would appeal to the grade nine mindset.

In hindsight, I should have left out those parts. Whenever the teacher read it aloud, my face reddened, as it did just now. So, if you want to feel proud of your overall work, leave out the trash and select the brass.

Roy Peter Clark devised a systematic way for you to edit out the worse and keep the best:

- In your paper margins, place brackets around the best parts of your essay. Try to determine what works best from the viewpoint of your readership.
- In the parts that you bracketed, number them from one to ten with ten being the best.
- Consider cutting out the low ranking elements on your page.
- If your writing is flowery, and you like how it sounds, or if it has intrigue, only keep it if it fits with the theme nicely.
- The stuff you cut out you can attempt to use in another essay, so keep it on file.
- Omit flowery adjectives and adverbs that just repeat, such as a "happy smile".

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

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

Choosing Significance over Seduction

Barbara Lehtiniemi



You're a week away from making a powerful difference to you and every other AU undergraduate student.

The candidates running for this month's AUSU by-election were announced August 6. Fourteen students from five Canadian provinces are vying for the six vacant council seats. Voting takes place online August 21 to 24.

Stephen Harper liked the idea of summer campaigning so much, he followed AUSU's lead and called a federal election mid-summer. Unlike the federal election, however, AUSU's campaign period is much shorter—two weeks as compared to the excruciating 11 weeks of the federal campaign.

AUSU's by-election has another striking difference from the Canadian federal election: in the AUSU election, each single vote has a powerful impact. Voter turnout for AUSU elections has traditionally been low. In the 2014 general election, fewer than 200 students cast votes; the previous election turnout in 2012 was even more pitiful with only about 100 voters.

Low voter turnout means that each single vote carries a lot of weight. One vote in this by-election can easily mean

the difference between 6th and 7th place—the former will land a candidate a seat on council, the latter gets nothing (but can try again next year.) In 2014, candidates were successful with as few as 56 votes; the most votes any one candidate received in that election was 118. With numbers like those, each voter's influence is significant.

Voting is easy (really, it is!) First, take some time over the next week to learn about your candidates. Then, any time from August 21 to August 24, vote online using the voting link that will be e-mailed to each eligible AUSU member when the polls open.

Learning about the fifteen candidates takes a small investment of time—ideal for essay-procrastination—and will assist you in making an informed choice. Election campaigning, much like your AU studies, is primarily online. Start by going to the AUSU [Elections page](#) for an overview of each candidate. On this page, candidates introduce themselves briefly; some have posted campaign posters in pdf.

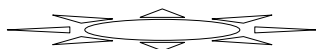
Next, head over to the AUSU [Forums](#). In the [By-Election 2015](#) forum, students can ask questions of the candidates. This forum is really your only way of discovering what each candidate stands for. Even if you don't post a question yourself, you'll learn a lot from reading candidates' responses to other students' questions. Some candidates have also used this forum to post their campaign platforms, and to invite direct questions from students.

In the election forum, what *isn't* said can be as important as what *is* said. Some candidates haven't responded to any student questions. If that's an indication of how responsive and engaged they'll be as councillors, perhaps it's better to know who those no-shows are ahead of voting day.

Summer isn't an ideal time to hold an election. Even for those students who toil at their studies during the summer, there are other, often more compelling, things to do. Despite the seduction of summer distractions, if you are eligible to vote, it's important that you do so. Will you choose significance over seduction next week? It really is up to you.

You don't have to hold a seat on student council to make a significant difference for you and every other AU undergraduate student. You just have to vote.

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



Beyond the Book Club

Carla Knipe



Book clubs are a modern phenomenon that have helped to change how people enjoy literature. The solitary pursuit of reading has turned social for many who use books clubs as a key way to mingle as they engage with literature. But, what about those who do not enjoy book clubs or cannot find a group to join? Granted, there are many online book clubs, but for those bibliophiles who just don't think book clubs are their thing, there are many other ways to express a love of literature—and not all of them require a group of people.

Start a Little Free Library

Little Free Libraries began in 2009 when Todd Bol, of Hudson, Wisconsin, built a model of a one-room schoolhouse as a tribute to his mother, a former schoolteacher who loved reading, and filled it with books. The idea blossomed into what is now known as Little Free Libraries. The idea is to build a miniature library, mount it in your neighbourhood, and fill it with books that anyone can take free of charge. The library perpetuates through the return of the borrowed books or through replacement by newly donated books. It isn't just about the books; it's also about getting to know your neighbours and helping to build up your community. There are now more than 30,000 LFLs across the globe and the movement shows no signs of slowing. For more information, see littlefreelibrary.org

BookCrossing

BookCrossing is defined as "the practice of leaving a book in a public place to be picked up and read by others, who then do likewise." Basically, you register a book on bookcrossing.com, leave it in a conspicuous place for others who will pick up the book, post online where it has travelled to, then re-release it back into the wild. The goal of BookCrossing is to make the world a free online book club.

Geek Crafts on Pinterest and Etsy

If you adore Jane Austen, can rattle off every single Harry Potter spell from memory, or just want to generally proclaim your love of books, there are so many ways to show your arty—and crafty—side. You can purchase all manner of ready-made products through Etsy or, if you wanted to make something yourself, Pinterest can provide ideas for everything from cross-stitch patterns to wall-art and bookmarks made from repurposed books. They should keep you busy for a while.

Host a literary-themed party

If you feel social, why not make it a book-themed gathering? There are so many possibilities, such as a Canterbury Tales medieval feast complete with storytelling, an Anne of Green Gables garden party (raspberry cordial is a must), or a Narnia-themed Christmas party. Costumes are optional!

Adult Colouring Books

In case you haven't heard, the trend of colouring has exploded. Colouring books for grownups are topping the book charts and are even outstripping novels in sales. Colouring has proven to be a stress reliever and a great way for people to make some art without having to draw. And, it's not just for females—blokes can get on it to with colouring books of pulp fiction covers, steampunk designs, and architecture. If you don't wish to purchase books right away, there are lots of free printables available on the Internet.

Write to a Writer

Sending writers some fan mail can mean a lot to them. If you think reading can be solitary, think about this: writers spend a lot of time on their own in front of their computer screen or pad of paper creating the words you like to read. Once their book is published, they often don't get to hear if—or how—their writing has connected with their audience. Contacting a writer, whether through social media, by attending a reading or book signing, or even finding their mailing address to send them a handwritten note, is a tangible way to support the Arts. This is especially true for local and new writers who might need that extra boost.

Become an Audio Book

If you want to make a difference to those who are no longer able to enjoy reading, why not see whether you can read in person to them or record yourself reading a book? Check with your local hospital, seniors' home, public library, or an organization that works with visually impaired persons to offer your talents.

Literary Tourism

Travelling to regions where your favourite authors lived, or visiting the settings for your favourite books, is the priciest way to express your love of literature but can be the most memorable. Britain is an obvious destination, but even closer to home can yield some fantastic places to visit.

Book Clubs aren't going to go away anytime soon, but perhaps these ideas will also be a fun and creative way to interact with the books and writers you love.

Carla Knipe is an AU English Major who lives and writes in Calgary, Alberta

The Art of Procrastination Not Doing It Right

Deanna Roney



The art of procrastinating; it is a skill learned through trial and error. Though perhaps a skill I wish I did not possess, it is one that I have perfected. I am lucky that I am often able to work through my desire to procrastinate, however, there are some days, some assignments, which overpower my will. Often I have found that in these times procrastinating for a short amount of time can be helpful toward the end product being of the calibre it should be. In this case, being able to effectively procrastinate is important to getting back into a productive mode.

So, how do you effectively procrastinate? I have found that if I simply do nothing, my mind is on what I should be doing. Not allowing myself that procrastinating break I need. This means that the time procrastinating is extended because I am aware that I need to be getting it done, but just do not want to. This leaves me feeling guilty and generally does not motivate me to get moving again.

The secret to procrastinating effectively is finding another project that you have been meaning to get done, but have not found the time: in my case, it is because I dedicate all my time to school work and can't bring myself to take a break. This means I have an endless supply of projects at the ready for when I need to procrastinate, guilt-free. For example, in the last week I have successfully avoided working on a paper by redoing the bathroom, painting the cabinets, and replacing all the hardware, I have also gone through the entire kitchen emptying all the cupboards and reorganizing (as well as donating a large box to the thrift store), and completely reorganized my office space. I find this is effective because normally these are tasks that (aside from painting) I dislike and often can't find myself motivated to dig in to, but when I am avoiding a paper these things suddenly do not seem so bad!

This results in successful, guilt-free, procrastination. At the end of the day I feel like I have accomplished something that needed to be done. And, I have taken a break from a paper that I needed to get some space from. It's a way of refreshing your mind and organizing your life. I feel like I have achieved something and, therefore, do not feel guilt-ridden because I have not done much (or anything) on my paper. I am able to look at what I accomplished and know that my procrastination was not in vain.

Being skilled in the art of procrastination can be a blessing. At least when I procrastinate I get a lot accomplished around the house, or elsewhere, that has likely been needing my attention for some time. These tasks become less menial and I enjoy the process while I take a break from school and avoid my paper. It winds up being a win-win situation for me, and for my house. Corners that have been neglected are suddenly spruced up and that feeling of accomplishment leaves me feeling like I can tackle anything: including that darn paper.

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

Fly on the Wall: Today Air Conditioning, Tomorrow the World?

Jason Sullivan



A blast of cold air washes over his face. Rapturous air conditioning has arrived. Just as waves of relaxation penetrate to his core an intrusive voice blurts out "I abhor A/C!" He starts. The universal joy of relief from sweltering summer heat seems unquestionable. This person, this Other, must surely have an ulterior motive for disliking the invisible ecstasy which air conditioning provides. Their particular point of view must hide some desire to bend and fracture the world to meet their will. Weird. How could anyone dislike what everyone seems to enjoy; don't some things apply to us all?

The feeling of air conditioning, like the mood of a piece of music, is only part of the story. At the sensory level much depends upon the individual. In this article I aim to demonstrate how the specificity of our individual realities seems to transcend external social forces, even as we are left only with recourse to roles and behaviours available to us in our society. At an important level there is no escape from life as a performance; no matter how authentic we feel we remain in submission to the court of social opinion.

In philosophical terms, issues of behaviour and affect (emotion) are framed as a debate between universal truths and contingent realities. The question is whether some truths transcend our particular selves or whether reality tangentially hinges upon context and experience. If the former is true then social norms must have some basis in truth. However, if the latter prevails then social relativism is the ground of being of the human experience. A recent article in 'Philosophy Now' notes that if the "essence of things is no longer transcendental, as Kant thought, but located within the contingent" then there can exist "no greater external perspective, no absolute standard...against which to measure the various disclosures of being-an idea that German thinker Theodor Adorno felt was prone to legitimizing Fascism" (Borowski, 24).

One might note that Adorno wasn't any old 'German thinker'; he was central to the Marxist Frankfurt school, and whose critical investigations of post-WWII consumer culture remain cogent today. Adorno's concern wasn't coming from an abstract anti-authoritarian point of view; it stemmed from a particular historical context, one very similar to our own. No perspective completely transcends social reality; to do so would be to embody omniscience in the literal sense of the word. There is no escape from social performance; our actions are neither reflections of universal truths nor contingent specifics. And yet, when cold filtered air caresses our sweating face, it's hard to believe anyone could disavow such a pleasurable sensation.

So, without tongue too implacably embedded in cheek, we might on the one hand ask whether a person who adores A/C, believing its pleasures to be applicable to anyone imbued with human spirit, is justified in his or her opinion. On the other hand we may ask whether an individual who dislikes A/C, despite being in the Canadian social minority, can truly hold this belief. Is the latter position merely an act, a put-on to justify environmentalism or oppositional-defiance?

As a member of the anti-A/C lobby, I would draw our attention to a common Okanagan phenomenon known as 'local smoke'. During our annual forest fire season, a deep haze descends into the Valley and fills our eyes and

ears. Out in my orchard last week, the smoke reminded me of the Beatles song 'Penny Lane' and its lyrics of bucolic "suburban skies" likewise being "in my ears and in my eyes" (McCartney & Lennon, online). Despite the pleasant feel of the song, there lurk some darker notes within its lyrics.

Penny Lane's happily wistful melody stands in contrast to its lyrics, not least of which is due to the fact that when one has something in ones ears and eyes (be they tears, waves or smoke) the sensation is often unpleasant. The refrain "very strange" takes on more meaning too; if one is partial to A/C a person who dislikes this seemingly 'universal-good' (to use a phrase of Plato and Kant) seems a little odd (McCartney & Lennon, online). You might wonder if I'm making excuses to find something sinister in a nice song and yet, within the lyrics, the tangential becomes more palpable.

A universal state of contentedness often contains fissures of discontent. Even an authentic presentation of self is not safe amidst the Pleasantville locale of Penny Lane. In the middle of a roundabout, a "pretty nurse is selling poppies from a tray, and though she feels like she's in a play, she is anyway" (Lennon & McCartney, online). Now, to anyone who's studied performativity (ie Judith Butler and Erving Goffman) alarm bells ring out. The nurse, not unlike the person taking an oppositional viewpoint vis a vis cold dry filtered air, is aware that whether or not she smiles and tows the line or rejects the 'Never Again' narrative of Remembrance Day and its poppies, she will still be seen as performing a role.

For a literary example of authenticity and performance, we see that near the end of J.M. Coetzee's 'Elizabeth Costello', which won the 2003 Nobel Prize for Literature, the protagonist finds herself in a thespian or novelist's idea of purgatory. In protest against being asked to submit a summary of her beliefs to a panel who will admit or deny her entry through the pearly gates, she ruminates on the nature of personal authenticity and whether we can ever inhabit a subjectivity which is final, absolute, and universal:

You might as well ask which is the true Elizabeth Costello: the one who made the first statement or the one who made the second. My answer is, both are true. Both. And neither. I am an other...You have the wrong person before you. If you think you have the right person you have the wrong person. The wrong Elizabeth Costello.

Costello realizes that whatever she expresses, she does within a matrix of social norms. Far from recourse to universals or particulars, her feelings, ideas and identities are as fluid as her social context allows. The fact that context itself is what produces desire and enjoyment gives pause to Theodor Adornos' worry that it is the particular and contingent that may lead to fascism. Perhaps folks who go against the grain of common sense, even while constrained to the social tools at hand, help reign in the authoritarian possibility of truths that that appear to be natural and self-evident. Whether it's oppositional-defiance or thoughtful authenticity, one can never be too careful. And hey, who doesn't enjoy a breath of fresh air in the metaphorical sense?

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Jason Hazel-rah Sullivan is a Masters of Integrated Studies student who loves engaging in discourse while working in the sunny orchards and forests of the Okanagan.

The Fit Student Performing Under Pressure, Part II

Marie Well



I love to curl up to a book about relaxation and stress management techniques. Finding a book on relaxation, I find myself peering at yet another trophy for my growing library. I am prone to anxiety. Interestingly, talking to people about anxiety, I always marvel at how many others experience extreme bouts. These people are high-rollers, too. Some work as general managers in large retail chain stores. Some work as directors in global hotel chains. Some work behind the Starbucks counter. What do they have in common? All of these people had to learn how to manage anxiety in their high demand positions. (Yes, a barista is a high demand position, although the pay doesn't suggest as such.)

Containing some of the best strategies that I have yet to encounter, Hendrie Weisinger and J. P. Pawliw-Fry wrote a marvellous read titled Performing Under Pressure. The kind of stress management they discuss pertains not only to athletes, to musicians, and to business people, but also to students staring at a deadline at three a.m. the night before.

The book *Performing Under Pressure* overflows with strategies and ideas for handling performance anxiety. So, let's delve in straightaway.

See Fearful Events as Exciting

Some people dread public speaking. I pursued a Communications degree namely for the public speaking opportunities. In junior high school, I performed in plays, once as the lead female role, and the idea of performing in front of an audience appealed to me. In essence, seeing public speaking as a thrill, I created a buffer against the anxiety that often creeps in with such events.

Wisely, Hendrie Weisinger and J. P. Pawliw-Fry argue for you to view pressure moments as opportunities, as adventures, as excitement. They say that "feeling challenged is an inherent performance steroid" (p. 112). In other words, try to make that scary paper exciting.

Downplay the Relevance

I had to attend to an assignment recently, and I feared that I wouldn't get it done on the day I had intended. As a result, anxiety gripped me, controlled me, distracted me for hours on end. The next day, when the anxiety had passed, I attended to the assignment. It took all of ten minutes to finish. Unnecessary suffering.

Hendrie Weisinger and J. P. Pawliw-Fry say that assigning a lot of significance to an event increases our anxiety levels. The next time you have an exam or interview, see it as less important, as "no big deal." Convince yourself that your grades aren't that relevant in the grand scheme of things; instead, "be mindful of what is most important in your life" (p. 117). Your anxiety will lessen, and your marks may just improve.

Develop Your Self-Esteem

My next article will delve more into the benefits and how-to of developing self-esteem. It will focus on Rick Hanson's book titled *Just One Thing: Developing a Buddha Brain One Simple Practice at a Time*. Hanson says that any suffering that has no positive outcome for yourself or others is unnecessary suffering, so don't indulge. When your self-esteem soars, you create a buffer against stress and anxiety and your daily life enriches, not just for yourself, but for others around you.

"Acknowledge the experience, skills and positive qualities you possess", writes Weisinger and Pawliw-Fry (p. 121). When you take note and pride in your self-worth, your tendencies to make errors declines. Thus, every day, dwell on your strengths. Think them through. List them on paper or in MS Word. Savour them.

Think in Depth on When You Performed Like a Rock Star

Have you ever had a time in life when you performed like a rock star? When you shone like no one else? When you had everyone eating out of your hands for some great feat you completed? I'm certain that something in your life stands out as monumental, inspirational, or pivotal; somewhere in your life experiences, you achieved the great. You made a difference. Think about those moments.

When beginning to write an essay or preparing for an upcoming exam, how can you get into the rock star mindset?

So that your resilience spikes, Weisinger and Pawliw-Fry say to focus on your past successes. The more you boost your confidence, the less you feel uncertainty or anxiety. Make a list of all of your successes and spend some time dwelling on them, enjoying the memories, deepening them in your psyche.

Listen to Music

Music can lessen any tension. I love to listen to Kelly Clarkson's resonant voice, especially her song that plays off the expression *What doesn't kill you makes you stronger*. After a stressful day, no other music inspires me the same way. I love studying to music for more qualitative as opposed to quantitative courses at the University. Putting on an inspirational song with a lively beat can motivate you to run that extra length, write with passion, or pump yourself with adrenaline for that next exam.

Prudently, Weisinger and Pawliw-Fry suggest you listen to music to distract yourself from anxiety before a big event, such as an exam. The music detracts from any worrisome thoughts that might arise. Be wary, however, music during intense study sessions, such as math study bouts, can interfere with performance.

Journal Your Feelings

Journaling is a practice that Athabasca University's very own Dr. Dron implements in his classes in the form of reflections, otherwise known as journaling. The benefits of journaling range from self-healing to writing improvement to letting go of duress. How would you feel if I told you that by journaling, you can even improve your grades?

Journaling my weight loss regime, I lost twenty pounds since this past December. The likelihood of success in goal achievement increases with journaling. I've also begun a writer's journaling project, according to the advice of Patricia Goodson in her book *Becoming An Academic Writer*. According to Goodson, your writing can turn prolific when you chart your sessions and journal your thoughts. However, I've never found success journaling with emotional hurts. I prefer to focus on the achievements and successes of the day.

So, what do you do when faced with exam pressure? Journal.

I love Hendrie Weisinger and J. P. Pawliw-Fry on writing about your concerns. If you are stressed about an exam, write your thoughts and feelings down. By writing these out, your anxiety will abate, your exam marks will skyrocket, and your worries will lessen. Research supports these findings.

Take care of your stress level, and your grades will follow.

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Course Exam

Bethany Tynes

WGST 422: Violence Against Women



Are you interested in human rights? Want to learn about systemic issues related to gender equality? [WGST 422 \(Violence Against Women: A Global Perspective\)](#) might just be the course for you. According to the syllabus, the course "examines the subject of violence against women from a human rights perspective" and "looks at the impact that specific social, cultural, political, and economic factors have on women's vulnerability to and experience of violence worldwide."

Dr. Karen Nielsen has "been part of AU for about 25 years, long before computers and email!" She currently serves as instructor for two graduate courses and tutors several undergraduate courses in the areas of Women's and Gender Studies and Criminal Justice, including WGST 422.

The material in WGST 422 is "wide ranging," says Nielsen. "Theories of violence against women are critically evaluated, as are the politics of violence including the individual and institutional practices that maintain and perpetuate the violence. It also looks at specific issues such as the effects of development and globalization on women's vulnerability to violence."

When asked why this course could be valuable, Nielsen offers an in-depth answer:

I believe that this course is very important especially in today's interconnected world where all of our students are increasingly exposed to violence and gender based discrimination even beyond their own communities. This course takes the approach that violence against women is a consequence of gender-based discrimination and gender inequality —a pervasive, world-wide inequality that escalates and perpetuates the imbalance of power between men and women.

Violence against women and girls is a huge human rights issue all over the world; they are routinely subjected to torture, starvation, humiliation, and murder just because they are female. In spite of this and in spite of a number of UN Nations Declarations about violence against women, women's rights are not commonly seen as human rights. The overarching goal WGST 422 is to give students a human rights perspective of violence against women, both nationally and internationally.

To help students accomplish this goal, "as with all AU courses, students receive all of the materials they need to complete the course. There are texts and most importantly, a detailed Study Guide that guides the students through the five units that comprise this course. There are also suggested reading lists and of course, students have access to hundreds of relevant journals and books through AU's library."

Dr. Deborah Foster also serves as a tutor for WGST 422, and adds that students' final grades are "based mostly on research papers, some of which only require research from the course materials while others expect students to research the topic of violence against women using AU library resources. This is a fourth year course, so students are expected to be able to critically evaluate material at a senior undergraduate level and effectively reference this material using a referencing style such as APA."

Student Mistelle Montague says that WGST 422 has been her overall favourite course, and that it "pushed [her] toward pursuing gender studies more seriously." When asked about why she enjoyed the course, Montague explains that "the course never felt like a chore to complete. It helped that my tutor was fantastic! The materials kept me engaged and everything was easy to follow."

Montague continues: "The course focuses on violence against women on a global level. It touches on intimate partner violence, the sex trade, and various factors that play a role in women's vulnerability - for example the societal promotion of women as a subordinate and the 'other'."

"The challenge to this particular course is in the readings," Montague says. "They are in depth and at times I did need to walk away and take a break." She also offers a word of caution: "there is sensitive subject matter involved" in this course, and "it could definitely be a trigger for some people."

"Students may find some of the material emotionally challenging," Nielsen explains, because "it is a difficult subject, especially the material that includes hearing the personal accounts of women who have been victims of violence." She further notes though that "tutors, who have experience in this field, both academically and professionally, are always available to help their students to process the emotional impact."

"Many of our students are women, and because of the prevalence of violence in Canada and world-wide, many of them will have experienced some level of gender based violence and discrimination. Their experiences certainly add another dimension in terms of learning but potential students should give thought to their own emotional well-being and ask themselves if they are ready to engage with this material. As I have already mentioned, tutors are available to help students to process the material both from an academic or emotional perspective."

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

The Mindful Bard

A Thousand Times Good Night

Wanda Waterman



Raping Human Agony With a Telephoto Lens

Film: *A Thousand Times Good Night*

Director: Erik Poppe

"I wanted to tell my readers all over the world, 'This is what you should be concerned about.' My skeptical retort to that in today's hyperactive media culture, in which more pictures of horror are spread than can possibly be assimilated, amounts to four words: 'Good luck with that.'"

- Erik Poppe, former photojournalist, director of *A Thousand Times Good Night*

The story is about a photojournalist, Rebecca, whose specialty is war stories, and in the first scene we witness an example of the moral compromise required to record an event that you may have the power to prevent.

True, helping impedes the chronicling, and the job of the photojournalist is to help by showing something to the world, but we soon see that when a photojournalist is present, even *not* helping can sabotage the chronicling. Right away we begin

to doubt the compassion that Rebecca claims as an excuse for her risk-taking.

You soon realise that this isn't a story about extremism, martyrdom, or the Islamic world, but rather the story of a woman struggling to maintain selfhood in spite of the responsibilities of marriage and motherhood.

Rebecca is negotiating the balance between the two and not having much success; the drama lies here, and not in the events she documents with her single lens reflex. She exhibits the self-justifications typical of those with hero complexes: When people won't accommodate her for being so great and wonderful, she quickly moves on to attempts to excite pity. "I need time. I was in an explosion," she tells her angry husband.

Luckily for her psychological integrity, she's surrounded by loved ones who won't take her bull. "Stop right there," says her friend when Rebecca tries to rationalise her career with altruism. "You do it for the excitement and the danger . . ."

It's true. Rebecca thrives on danger and is unable to live in the now. Her house is in an idyllic setting, her husband and two daughters are gorgeous and fascinating people, and, as made clear in a lovely scene by the sea with her husband after their initial reconciliation, she has access to the lovely, healing power of couple hood. But her restlessness is tangible as she attempts to live a quiet life back home in Ireland with her husband and two daughters. "I should shut up. I'm not good at this—life, being normal," she remarks to her husband after a walk on the beach with his colleagues.

Her husband tells her she should accept a new assignment in Africa, for the freedom of conditional individuation, but also to strengthen the bond with another family member, their daughter, who he says she should take along. Unfortunately, Rebecca is an addict, photojournalism is her gin, and moderation simply isn't doable.

After having promised her family never to work in another war zone Rebecca returns to Afghanistan alone, where she watches a mother prepare her own daughter for a suicide mission. It's this scene that finally brings Rebecca to her knees, breaking down the internal wall she'd built inside to separate her work from her role as mother. She realises that she's no different from these women; she has sacrificed her children to a "higher agenda," a belief system that, in the end, proves itself absurd and destructive.

There are many elements in this film that emerge from the memory of director Erik Poppe, who worked as an international photojournalist in the 1980s.

A Thousand Times Good Night manifests six of the Mindful Bard's criteria for films well worth seeing.

- It's authentic, original, and delightful.
- It poses and admirably responds to questions that have a direct bearing on my view of existence.
- It's about attainment of the true self.
- It inspires an awareness of the sanctity of creation.
- It displays an engagement with and compassionate response to suffering.
- It makes me appreciate that life is a complex and rare phenomena, making living a unique opportunity.

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

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

Student Sizzle AU's Hot Social Media Topics

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



AUSU Student Forums

One week into the campaign period, the By-Election 2015 forum is a hive of activity, buzzing with dozens of posts from students and candidates. Elsewhere, in the General Student Chat forum, Tori wonders if e-texts can be accessed before the course start date.

AthaU Facebook Group

Mists asks if a parchment can be replaced if it becomes damaged. Christofer expresses interest in starting up an accounting study group.

Other posts include overcoming discouragement, the AUSU By-Election, Chicago style, and courses CMIS 351, HUMN 201, PHIL 333 and 335, and PSYC 290 and 323.

Twitter

@AthabascaUSU (AUSU) tweets: "Our Mobile App is set to launch in September! Visit our website for details at <http://www.ausu.org/services/app.php> [#AthaU](#)" and "New to AU? Check out the online Student Orientation! <http://ow.ly/QDd8S> [#AthabascaU](#) [#AthaU](#)."

In Conversation

With Marlowe Grey, Part III

Wanda Waterman



Marlowe Grey *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.*

Recently Pietro took the time to answer Wanda Waterman's questions about movies, creative inspiration, and the production of their upcoming full-length album. (See Part I of this interview [here](#) and Part II [here](#).)

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

We aim to be imaginative sonically, coloring with our sound the way *Waking Life* (by Linklater) colors and animates with its imagery. *Chinatown* by Roman Polanski, shot in the early 70's, always reminds us to take our time, be classic, and pay homage to the great creativity of that period.

Life moves so fast now. To think there were no cell phones when I was a kid, and no internet, is weird and incomprehensible.

I also love movies that bring truth and awareness to the foreground, like *All The President's Men*. Speaking up and daring to talk about stuff that's hard to talk about—that's what that movie is about.

In a world of what seems like endless music, where it's challenging to even be heard, I realize it's not about being heard, but being consistent and honest about what you're trying to share.

What conditions do you require in your life in order to go on being creative?

Like I said earlier, we make this up as we go. We have a five-year plan, a 10-year plan, and so on. But I try to remember that I've never been *here* in this moment before, so there's always going to be something I'm dealing with that's threatening to distract me from being here *now* and *now* and *now*. So, I guess the short answer is to remember to be as present as possible.

What do you feed your muse?

I live as much of a full life as I can. I try to do everything I want to do, all the while knowing it's impossible to do everything with the short amount of time we have on this planet. It's obvious that we can't take anything with us when we go, so experience feeds me, which of course transfers naturally into our music.

Are there any books, films, or albums that have deeply influenced your development as an artist?

I love dark shit, so I could list a million things; however I'll spare you. I view myself as inherently cynical and can go to that dark place really fast and easy, yet, as an adult, I now realize how one-sided and boring that is, especially if it's *all the time*. I gravitate to art that's sad and dark and serious but with some hope or light in it

somewhere. For example, I have no proof of an afterlife, yet I hope there is one. I want to sit and talk with my dad again.

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

We are here to have fun, kick ass, drink beer, be aware, speak up about what we stand for, and to remember that *everyone* has their own view that should be respected.

Tell us about your current and upcoming projects.

We're finishing our next full-length, *The Vanessa Bell*, which is coming out next spring. We have a handful of videos on the way and some shows this fall and winter in NYC. Next year we might just tour a bit and play a few festivals. We are working, working, working . . . Too many songs to record!

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

International News Desk

At Home and Abroad



At Home: No More Student Loans in Newfoundland and Labrador

Perhaps fed up with the endless tide of "newfie" jokes, the Progressive Conservative government of Newfoundland and Labrador has decided to eliminate all future student loans. Instead, provincial student financing will be based on non-repayable grants for those who qualify. The [report](#) from CBC points out that while this would cover approximately 40% of the cost of post-secondary for those students on student financing, the bulk of student assistance still comes in the form of interest bearing federal student loans.

The Newfoundland and Labrador government expects to spend 50.6 million on the program to cover the years from 2014 to 2019, with about 7000 students expected to be eligible for the funding.

Around the Globe: Student Debt a Concern for Democrats

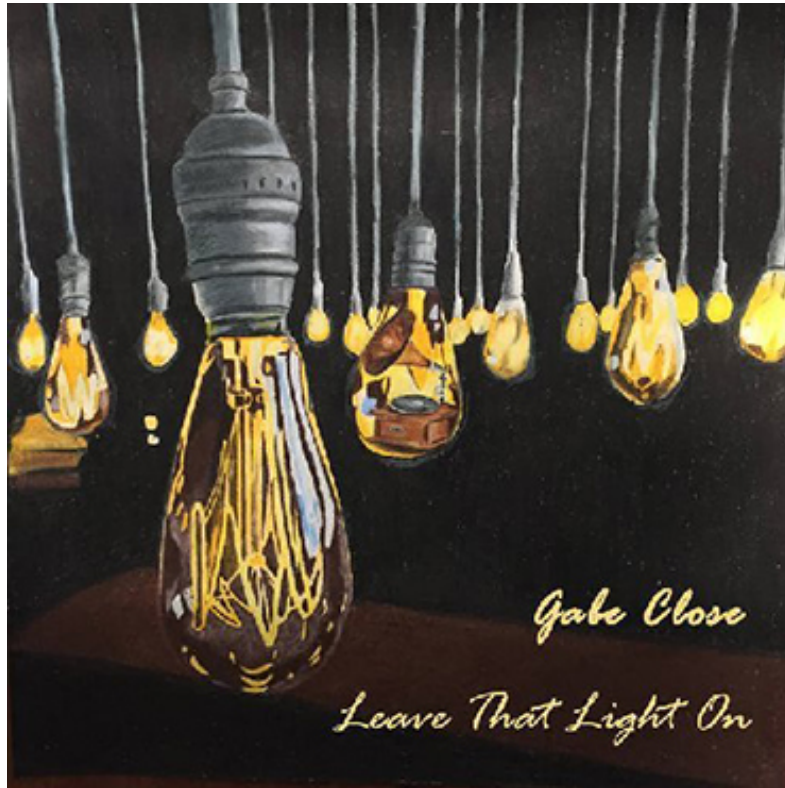
In the United States, contenders for the democratic presidential ticket are beginning to make student debt and debt relief a high visibility platform point. This week, candidate Hillary Clinton unveiled her plan to make college more affordable by providing incentives to public universities that guarantee students don't need to take out loans at least for their tuition. One of her rivals, Vermont Senator Bernie Sanders goes further than that calling for solutions for students that are completely debt-free.

More interestingly, Clinton is not framing the issue simply as one to benefit students and parents, but as a centrepiece of her economic agenda. Noting the debt levels of new graduates as a hindrance to a well-performing economy, Clinton [calls the current system](#), where paying for college pushes peoples dreams "further and further out of reach" a "betrayal of everything college is supposed to represent.

Music Review

Gabe Close

Samantha Stevens



Musician: Gabe Close

EP: *Leave That Light On*

Every once in a while I come across a musician that seems to create magnificent music so effortlessly. The ease of mastering their craft can be heard in their music; this mastery is evident with every beat of the drum, note delicately sung, and guitar string strum. Gabe Close is one such master of music, and his latest six-track EP *Leave That Light On* features some of the best songs that I have heard in the Americana genre in a long time.

Gabe grew up in Louisville, Kentucky and began his life of performing at an early age. He first performed music in church, where he learned to sing and play guitar. As he grew older, and began to develop his own sound, Gabe was greatly influenced by legends like Bob Dylan, Van Morrison, Bruce Springsteen, Neil Young,

and Ryan Adams. In 2009, after some time away from his home town, Gabe began his recording career and began playing many venues around Louisville. *Leave That Light On* is Gabe's third release and is perfect if you are looking for something easygoing yet thoughtful and sensitive this summer.

Although all six of the tracks on this EP are amazing, there are two that I feel draw attention to Gabe's talent and diverse sound. "Weary Mind" is the first track on the album and it reminds me of something that I would hear from Blue Rodeo, Blues Traveller, or even Fleetwood Mac. Apart from the steady drums and guitar, the focus of the song is on the singing. Gabe's vocals are beautiful and the accompanying female voice is a wonderful addition. The harmony between the two voices is astounding. What makes this song even better is the dominant piano, which I am a sucker for, that somehow compliments the singing without overpowering it. I think it is because of the piano that more emphasis is given to the lyrics at important points.

"Everything Reminds Me of You" is the second track on the album and is easily my favourite on this EP. Opening with a piano solo, the song slowly transitions to the lyrics, which are mournful and melancholy, yet the song is surprisingly light and hopeful. The accompanying trumpets and saxophone solo make this track rise above the rest on the EP because of its originality. It is because of Gabe's unique take on a heart-broken love song that makes this song stand out for me.

The remainder of the tracks are equally magnificent, and I leave it to you to discover them. I will say though that Gabe's ability to insightfully examine the human heart and soul are a credit to the Americana, Blues, and Singer/Songwriter genres. *Leave That Light On* is available [online](#) and on iTunes.

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



Dear
Barb

Barbara Godin

Rethinking the Benefits from Death

Dear Barb:

I have an adult daughter, with whom I am estranged. We have not spoken for three years. I have never abused or neglected her in any way. If anything I may have been a bit overbearing. Through the years every time something happens in her life, she gets mad at me and doesn't speak to me. I always initiate reconciliation and do what she wants me to. However this time I have reached a point in my life, where I have to be true to myself. I have contacted her three times but she is unwilling to reconcile and I do not want to beg as I know I did nothing to bring about this situation. Anyway, the reason I'm writing you is because I have an insurance policy and my daughter is the beneficiary. I have been considering taking her name off the policy, but I keep changing my mind. I feel that if she doesn't want me in her life she shouldn't benefit from my death? I don't feel comfortable talking about this with anyone in the family, so I'm looking for a second opinion. What should I do?

Thanks, Helen

Hi Helen:

Thanks for your excellent question.

I'm sure this scenario plays itself out time and again in many families, especially between mothers and daughters and fathers and sons. Often people need someone to blame for their mistakes, thus relieving them of the responsibility and leaving them to believe they are the victim. This is not a healthy way to live your life, as we all make mistakes and blaming someone else, does not take the onus off you. I don't know how old your daughter is, but often as people mature they are able to see situations in a different light, however it doesn't appear that your daughter has reached this point yet. There really is nothing you can do until she is ready. As far as your insurance policy, you obviously made her the beneficiary for a reason, perhaps simply because she is your daughter and you wanted her to have this. If this is the case, she is still your daughter whether she talks to you or not. Try not to become vindictive, rise above! Besides, as she gets older her thinking will likely change and hopefully you will still be here to give her an opportunity to work through these issues. Unfortunately, if you are not still of this world when she comes to that realization, no amount of money is going to make her feel better. My advice would be to leave the insurance policy as it is, but ultimately you have to do what feels right in your heart.

Good luck Helen.

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

Weird Canada

CANADIAN LAW

In Canada, witchcraft is illegal, but only if it's fake.

I caught this shameless hussy practicing witchcraft! Take her to the police station!

Do her spells work?

YES!!!

Forget it. If her spells work, she's a real witch, so she's legal.



WRITTEN BY WANDA WATERMAN



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

AUSU By-Election

Be sure to vote in the 2015 AUSU By-election. Your voice matters!

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](#).



Course Evaluations Coming Soon!

AUSU is in the final stages of creating the new AU course evaluation system. Stay tuned for the launch in September!

AUSU Career Links

AUSU has a career resource page to help our members with employment in Canada.

For more information visit our website [here](#).

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

AUSU is Officially a Member of CASA!

AUSU is now officially a member of CASA, the Canadian Alliance of Student Associations.

CASA is a national voice for Canada's post-secondary students that advocates on their behalf to the federal government. When Canada's leaders make decisions affecting the post-secondary education system they turn to CASA for solutions.

This will help AUSU have a voice at the national level and a strong alliance for student advocacy.

Find out more about CASA on their website [here](#).



AUSU is back on the Landing

For those that are not familiar with it, the Landing is AU's Social Networking site where students can join groups, post blogs, share pictures, and much more.

AUSU has opened up a group on the landing for all our members. Feel free to check out the Landing for AUSU announcements, to network with other members, or to chat with AUSU staff and council.

Visit our Landing group [here](#).

CLASSIFIEDS

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

THE VOICE

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