

THE VOICE

MAGAZINE

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Meeting the Minds

Dr. Mark McCutcheon

Atoning for My Errors

Taking Part of the Blame

Get Out and Vote

A Single Vote, A Mass Change

Plus:

The Study Dude

Caveman Carbs

and much more!



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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR



It's kind of lonely in here.

**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

The Corruption Party of Canada



No, this isn't about any of the parties currently running. I was just thinking lately about how some of the rules regarding campaign financing for our election are poorly thought out.

As I'm sure you're aware, when you donate to a political party, you receive up to 75% of that donation back as a tax deduction. The maximum deduction is \$650 if you donate \$1,275, which is about 51%. Then, once a campaign has started, 60% of campaign expenses will be reimbursed if the candidate receives at least 10% of the vote in their riding. What qualifies as a campaign expense is left extremely loose. You could, for instance, pay any number of people \$1,275 to "advertise" for you. Perhaps even the exact number of people who donate \$1,275 to you. Whether they actually do or not is irrelevant.

I'm sure some of you can see where I'm going with this already. So far as I can tell, there's very little preventing anybody from running as a candidate in an election for the sole purpose of receiving donations and paying most of that donation back to those who donated. The scheme would be that you pay this "candidate" your \$1,275, or

whatever you can afford, and then he turns around and hires you to "advertise" for his campaign at a cost of 90% of what you donated. The candidate keeps 10% to cover his accounting expenses and to make his own profit on the scheme.

You've then essentially paid \$128 for a tax deduction of \$650. Even better, you don't actually have to have the \$1,275 to begin with, as it can be donated "in services"

But wait, this gets worse. The candidate lets you know that if he gets 10% of the vote in the riding, he will pay back all of his donors proportionately to what they donated. So if you donated the full amount, you'd receive an additional \$765 once the campaign ends. So now you've received a net \$1,287 in combined tax deduction and repayment, all for the cost of a vote. More than you ever "donated" in the first place.

And where this gets really bad? What if it's a tight riding and enough people are in on the scheme that the candidate wins? Now we've elected someone specifically *because* they (and we) are corrupt enough to take advantage of the system. On the bright side, I guess there'd be no doubt about what we elected.

Of course, all of this leaves me with the question, "anybody want to help me start this new party?"

In a slightly more serious note, be sure to check out our Meeting the Minds, with Dr. Mark McCutcheon. Also this issue, Barb Lehtiniemi comes forward and makes a confession, plus reviews, advice, and interviews to help improve your state of mind, if not your marks.

Enjoy the read!

MEETING THE MINDS

INTERVIEWS with AU's EDUCATORS



An Associate Professor for AU's Centre of Humanities and Master of Arts in Integrated Studies programs, Dr. Mark McCutcheon teaches a variety of courses on everything from the cultural politics of copyright to Canadian adaptations of Frankenstein, to modern media theory and beyond. He was kind enough to give The Voice Magazine this interview.

You have won a variety of awards and acclamations. What are some of your most monumental awards, positions, and acclamations?

Actually, by my count I've won only one teaching award, but it means a lot to me: the AU Grad Students' Association named me for its Outstanding Distinction for AU Faculty award in 2012. I've won a couple of SSHRC research awards – those are tough to compete for, so they mean a great deal too. But I have to say I've been as thrilled (or more) to hear of awards and distinctions won – and further degrees pursued – by students I've taught and supervised. My students' achievements and distinctions suggest I might be doing something right.

Please fill us in on the range of course you have taught or designed at Athabasca.

I coordinate AU's undergraduate courses in subjects where literature intersects with other media: drama (ENGL 303, 304, 431); film (ENGL 373); and the digital (ENGL 475 is closed for me and my colleague Jolene Armstrong to give it a total overhaul and update – to be relaunched very soon). I've also designed and taught graduate courses for our MA program (MAIS) on postcolonial and diasporic cultural subjects (ENGL 633, LTST 637), and on academic writing (MAIS 606). I've also got other courses on literary history in the works.

As an instructor in online education, what are some of the challenges as well as some of the highlights of teaching online?

Good question. Let me start with the highlights: I find it relatively easy to get to know a student through email, phone calls, etc. When I started teaching at AU I did not at all expect that I would find it easier to get to know students better at a distance than in the face-to-face classroom, but that's exactly what's happened. But sure, there are challenges too: here are a couple of the big ones for me. First, staying available and as clearly articulate for students as I can. Open learning means all your interactions are documented, they make a paper-trail, so it's of the utmost importance always to represent yourself and your subject matter with the utmost professionalism, courtesy - and clarity. Second, while I find it relatively easy to detect, catch, and penalize almost all plagiarism and academic fraud, there are a very few scenarios in which it's very hard to do. (No, I'm not going into details.) This frustrates me, because academic fraud hurts nothing so much as AU's reputation (which AU

is constantly challenged to prove, anyway), which means it hurts the value of your learning and the very degree you're earning here.

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

This is a *great* question. Can I let a student answer it? A couple of years ago, one of my students expressed frustration with online study problems I'm sure you're familiar with: mainly workload and self-directed work discipline to stay with their studies and see them through. I suggested the student share their concerns on AU's social network site, the Landing. The student did so: "The reason for this post is to see if anyone out there could actually help me out with tips and tricks they have developed over the years to coop both work and school at the same time, how do you schedule your planner." And right away other students started posting replies and comments that soon proved helpful to all involved (myself included): outlining papers, using regular small chunks of time (lunch hours, weeknights) for study time, making a habit of scheduling, etc. See the full discussion at <https://landing.athabasca.ca/blog/view/103510/help-with-on-line-courses> (you'll need to log in to the Landing with your student ID and password to read this thread). I expect many of your readers might find some helpful tips there.

All I would add to their answers is to point out the place they shared it: in the Landing, which is AU's social network, a site that bundles together a bunch of tools (blogging, twitter-like announcements, wikis, even web-conferencing now) – and all for only the AU community of students, staff, and faculty. The kinds of online environments we occupy and how we occupy them can stimulate (or frustrate) student motivation. The Landing has been criticized for the learning curve needed to make good use of it (criticized by faculty as well as students, mind you), but I believe it's exactly the kind of user-driven, student-oriented social technology that can hugely benefit – and enhance the learning of - the student who takes time to play and practice with it.

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

Feedback is especially crucial on students' written work, and both the student and the instructor have certain responsibilities to meet in order for feedback to advance the student's learning. The student is responsible for scheduling their work and submitting writing in a way that allows for feedback to be meaningful. For example, if a student waits until the last day of a course contract to submit all written work, whatever feedback I might give on that written work isn't meaningful because it won't contribute to the student's continuing learning in the course. So I always encourage students to schedule and pace the writing and submission of essays, so they can actually use the feedback I give in how they approach the next writing assignment.

Similarly, as the instructor I am responsible to make sure my feedback is constructive and genuinely helpful for the student to build on. So for example I don't like to return written work with my comments scribbled in red all over every page: that's too much. I prefer to identify just two or three specific things in a given piece of writing that a student should take note of and work on in future. As for staying constructive, I've written up a blog post that more or less describes how I keep my criticism constructive: <https://academicalism.wordpress.com/2013/12/03/tips-for-giving-constructive-criticism-on-academic-writing/>

The fact I blog about topics like this points to the other part of my approach to providing feedback, which is about making my expectations for course work and academic writing generally both easy to understand and publicly available to access. (As with this related blog post, for instance: <https://academicalism.wordpress.com/2013/11/25/academic-essay-writing-pointers-and-resources/>.)

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

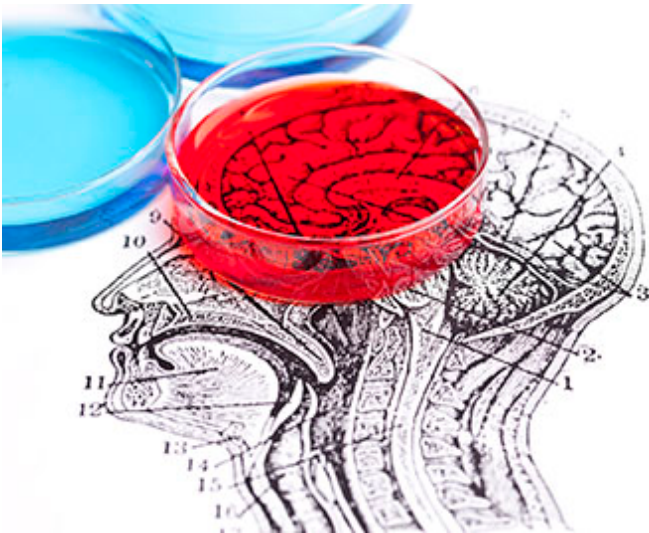
I'm all for trying out new teaching tools and technologies – I use, research, and teach extensively with digital media (for instance, find me on Twitter at @sonicfiction). However, I try to be mindful of two ongoing concerns. First, students bring a spectrum of abilities and aptitudes to digital media; as my learning designer colleague Mary Pringle argues, "we would be doing our students a disservice if we didn't help them to develop the communication skills they need to succeed in a networked world." So it's crucial to actively help students learn how to use and master these transferable technical and communication skills – and in particular to use them according to critical digital literacy, an understanding of these tools' sources, structures, built-in assumptions – that is, according to how, as McLuhan said, "the medium is the message" – how every technology tends to structure a new environment according to its own built-in priorities.

Second, I'm also very concerned for current and prospective students to know that if they prefer – or need – to use only print materials and the postal service to complete their AU studies, they have every right and claim to do so. AU courses don't need to prioritize print, now that so much exciting stuff is happening online, but they should make sure print- and paper-based learning remain available as an option, especially since some of the community groups that would most benefit from open postsecondary education – prison inmates, for instance – cannot access computers or the Internet. So I'm less interested in technological shifts than in ensuring these shifts don't end up excluding prospective students.



**Primal Numbers
Caveman Carbs**

S.D. Livingston



So you've decided to lose some weight this summer. Maybe you're trying one of the popular diet trends, like the Paleo diet. It's a protein-rich, low carb regime that, besides being touted for weight loss, has a major claim to fame—it drove the huge leap forward in human brain power some 800,000 years ago. The problem? The latest science shows that carbs and cooking actually played a major role in our intelligence evolution.

The Paleo diet, like any other trend, has a few variations. But essentially, it's big on meat and tuber vegetables and avoids dairy, processed grains, beans, and legumes. The logic is that our

Paleolithic ancestors didn't suffer from many of the modern lifestyle diseases caused, in part, by diet—things like Type 2 diabetes, obesity, and hypertension. And since those Paleo people (presumably) ate lots of meat, root vegetables, and no dairy or farmed grains, then it must be good for modern humans to do the same. Some sites, like Paleo Leap, even claim that the Paleo diet "has the potential to cure a good part of those conditions that are quite new to us," such as Crohn's disease and multiple sclerosis.

Then, of course, there's the correlation between brain size and protein. As this *Telegraph* [article](#) notes, a basic tenet of the Paleo diet is that "it was a protein rich regime that fuelled massive brain growth for early humans."

With a pedigree like that, it's no surprise that Paleo-diet books, videos, and seminars have grown in popularity. But before you ditch that whole-grain pasta and reach for a steak (and your wallet), you should probably take a closer look at whether science really backs up those claims.

First of all, even if we knew exactly what the typical Paleolithic-era person ate, it would be almost impossible for us to duplicate it. It's one thing to say that they ate meat and vegetables. What's easy to forget is that a wild, uncultivated steak or onion that existed during the Paleolithic—a period, by the way, that extends from some 2.6 million to 10,000 years ago—wouldn't have much in common with our modern equivalents. Thanks to selective breeding, the size and nutritional value of everything from cows to cucumbers has changed, sometimes significantly (like the Belgian Blue, a breed of cow that weighs over a ton).

The other thing that's evolved since Paleolithic times is your modern human digestion. For instance, this NPR article [explains](#) that human adults only developed the enzyme for lactose tolerance around 8,000 years ago. Which means that even early Holocene meals had started to look significantly different than Paleolithic ones did.

Still, what about the claim that lots of meat and vegetables will help you avoid modern lifestyle diseases like Type 2 diabetes and atherosclerosis? Well, a diet high in refined sugar and salt obviously doesn't help, but *Discovery* [reports](#) that a high-risk gene for Type 2 diabetes "was apparently inherited from Neanderthals."

And researchers in another [study](#) found that "atherosclerosis was common in four preindustrial populations including preagricultural hunter-gatherers." Out of 137 mummies, evidence of the condition was found in 47 of them, just over a third.

But what about boosting brain power? Surely the Paleo diet was responsible for building our relatively large brains. Not entirely. It was the addition of cooked starch to those ancient diets that played a key role in the evolution of our big brains. That's the word from evolutionary geneticists at University College London, as *The New York Times* [reports](#).

Obviously, the claims behind the Paleo diet aren't the only ones that don't stand up to scientific scrutiny. There's been the raw food diet, the hCG diet (extreme calorie restriction coupled with injections of human pregnancy hormone), and the cabbage soup diet.

The Paleo diet might not be as extreme as some of those, and it does eliminate unhealthy options like highly processed junk foods. But the fact remains that any diet restricting you to one or two food groups comes at the cost of other nutritional benefits. In this case, things like Vitamin D and calcium.

The bottom line? Whether you're looking at a new diet to lose weight, gain energy, or improve health, check out the science before you start. Then be sure to weigh it against the sales pitch.

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.

Atoning for My Errors

Barbara Lehtiniemi



The state of AUSU council is my fault.

Full confession: I'm one of the few students who voted in the 2014 general election. In that election, only around 170 out of approximately 25,000 eligible students cast ballots, so each vote carried a heavy weight of responsibility. Many of the candidates I voted for won seats on council.

I have repented of a few of my votes. While I would vote for some councillors again if they chose to run in an election, there are some I would not. Having kept a close eye on council since the 2014 election—I've attended most council meetings and followed the issues closely and actively—I've witnessed the disintegration of the current council firsthand. I've seen bad apples, good apples, and what happens when poor selection allows the two to mix.

In this by-election, AU students have the opportunity to contribute to the rebuilding of AUSU council. With this opportunity comes responsibility. It's not a matter of bringing the number of councillors back up to a workable quantity, although with only three of the original nine councillors still holding seats, that's certainly part of it.

Quality is what counts here. While successful candidates in the 2014 general election took their places at the helm of a smoothly-functioning organization, successful candidates in this by-election are faced with a heavier task. Which candidates can roll up their sleeves, pitch in to clean up the lingering mess, and rebuild an AUSU that can return to doing what it's supposed to do: serve the students?

More importantly, which assembly of candidates can work well together as well as with the three current councillors? Which configuration of candidates brings the best pool of knowledge, skills, and temperament?

Before I cast my ballot in this by-election, I'm going to find out as much as I can about each candidate. I thought I had done a thorough job last election, but my screening process let some rotten choices slip through. This time, I'm paying closer attention and digging deeper in order to vote for the best possible group of candidates.

Selecting candidates for council is a little like hiring someone for a job. There may not be a perfect candidate but a thorough selection process increases the chances of a good fit. Is it possible to be thorough with an online campaign? I don't think so. You learn a lot more about someone when you can see and hear them in action. The lack of face-to-face campaigning, however, makes what is available online even more valuable.

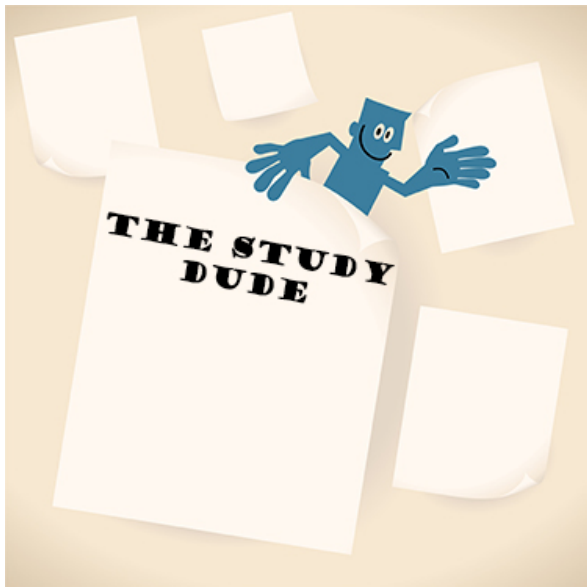
Campaigning for this by-election mainly takes place on the AUSU forums. In the [2015 By-Election](#) forum, most—but not all—candidates have been answering students' questions and making campaign statements. There is additional information on each candidate on the AUSU [Election](#) page.

To go beyond a candidate's "campaign face" requires a bit of digging. I've been reading through LinkedIn profiles, Facebook pages, and Twitter accounts, just like a prospector employer would. I've checked out the AUSU council [meeting minutes](#) to see which candidates have attended council meetings. And I've done web searches of candidates' names just to see what else pops up (making sure that any search results pertain to the candidate and not someone else with a similar name.)

If you're an AU undergraduate student, you can help me atone for my past voting errors. Before you click on the link to your online ballot, find out as much as you can about each candidate. With your vote and my vote and the best six candidates, we can put AUSU, its council, and its members, back on the path to success.

Voting in the AUSU By-election began today, August 21, and continues until August 24. Links to online ballots were e-mailed to members when the polls opened. Election information is available on the AUSU [website](#) or from the Chief Returning Officer at cro@ausu.org.

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



Study Tips from a Semi-Anonymous Friend

Exercises for Self-Editing and Writing Academically

There is nothing more that The Study Dude wants for you than to self-edit your paper with the greatest techniques available.

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 examines the book *Becoming an Academic Writer: 50 Exercises for Paced, Productive, and Powerful Writing* by Patricia Goodson.

Start a Writing Journal and Record Your Sessions in Excel

I love to journal. Journaling not only helps improve your writing, but also clarifies your thoughts, heals your soul, and releases tension. I've encountered books that talk about the value of journaling your sessions, such as Paul Sylvia in his book *How to Write a Lot: A Practical guide to Productive Academic Writing*. Paul talks about taking recording your writing sessions to an extreme, whereby he advises you to record all of your sessions in an SPSS data sheet. You've got to love his tenacity.

In recording your writing sessions, you enable yourself to write more prolifically. At least, most books profess that writing output increases with journaling and recording sessions.

Bearing superb strategies for journaling and recording writing sessions, Patricia Goodson can help you transform into a prolific writer:

- Keep an Excel spreadsheet where you clock in your start and end writing times. Have each line entry dated and type in your total minutes so that you can tally your time writing each week.
- Boice (as cited in Goodson, 2013) says that "faculty who shared their writing logs were 9 *times* more productive than the faculty who had only logged their times, without sharing the log with someone else."
- In log sum your minutes for the month and be sure to include how many words you wrote plus what you worked on.
- After you log your start time, begin journaling your writing goals, thoughts, and concerns. Go to your actual writing task and get to work. Once you finish writing, journal what you accomplished and what you aim to achieve in your next session. At the very end, go to your Excel spreadsheet and log in your end time.

Nab Yourself a Top-Notch Vocabulary

In the graduate program, my vocabulary paled compared to that of other graduate students. I yearned for a means to up the ante with my vocabulary, but didn't quite know how to approach the matter. Since then, I started writing unfamiliar words I read in the back of the books I find them in, and then scouting out dictionary.com for meanings. I also created flashcards in dictionary.com pertaining to the listing of unfamiliar words I jotted down in the back of each book. I rarely used the flashcards, however, and sometimes the dictionary.com site would sputter, and hours of definition entries would disappear before my eyes.

Now, I read two pages of the dictionary each night, aiming to read the entire dictionary cover-to-cover within a year's time. The more I read the dictionary, the more familiar I get with dictionary structures. I now realize that I would love to own a dictionary that includes word origins, information on whether an indirect or direct object follows a verb, and example sentences. These little perks make themselves desirable the more I read the dictionary.

By reading a dictionary cover to cover, I have come to learn how a word can have multiple meanings, none of which relate even remotely to one another. These nuances make reading the dictionary fun.

I recently discovered an Oxford dictionary that contains special inserts naming significant historical people and events. Reading through the people's entries, I delighted in the knowledge gleaned. For instance, Alfred Adler introduced the inferiority complex and Adam in Adam and Eve exists both in the Koran and the Christian bible. Reading dictionaries made me realize that I might even thrive on reading encyclopaedias for sheer entertainment reasons.

- Get some journal articles from top-of-the-line well-written journals in your field. You can talk to the AU librarians for guidance.
- Jot down an assortment of nouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs that appear in the document.
- Select three verbs and any three of the following: nouns, adjectives, or adverbs. Look up the word definitions, even if you think you understand the meaning. Take these six words and implement them in your own writing.
- Alternatively, look at novel words in the journal article and write them up in a phone book style under the respective alphabetical letter. Write in the journal article's definition of the word, if provided, and ensure that you write down the dictionary definition of the word also. Be sure to cite the definition. Such nuanced definitions will come in handy for your own article drafts.

- Purchase a disciplinary thesaurus and dictionary (for example, the dictionary of education), and enter in the definitions found from these disciplinary reference guides into your phone book.

Master the Self-Editing Craft

I used to self-edit my documents in detail, first focusing on restructuring big sections and then emphasizing grammar and spelling. I aimed to polish my submission to a tee: not a single mistake would remain. In ensuring an error proof document, I guaranteed myself as close to an A grade as possible.

My strategy included finalizing the first rough draft at least two weeks in advance of the deadline, revisiting the document with corrections and reorganizations every second day or so. This seemed to work fine, but many other strategies for self-editing could streamline the process with even more pizzazz.

Now, after my long hiatus from writing academic essays, I find myself struggling to get back a momentum with self-editing. Aiming to enter a graduate program again in the future, strategies for self-editing remain imperative to my future success.

To aid both myself and you, the reader, in learning self-editing techniques, we shall visit Patricia Goodson's outline of self-editing strategies.

- Highlight the key ideas in all of your paragraphs. Separate these key ideas onto a new word document and then organize them chronologically, thematically, or structurally. Remove sentences that don't flow with the argument or rewrite them so they fit. Insert a transition at the beginning of the paragraph to ensure the flow.
- The paragraphs should be structured with a starting optional transition followed by the main idea followed by the main idea details.
- Goodson says don't outline at the start, but outline what you write. By outlining only after you make your draft, you enable creative flow rather than the logical structure that outlining at the beginning would superimpose. Focus on gaps, order everything so they flow.
- Highlight every instance of the preposition "of" and try to tighten your writing by eliminating it. For instance, instead of saying "The bottle of wine", say instead, "The wine bottle".
- Try to eliminate the following words: of, that/which, this/those/these/those, and to be verbs.
- Locate a reverse dictionary. A reverse dictionary allows you to look up a phrase and retrieve a similar word or word phrase. The Website www.onelook.com offers a reverse dictionary feature.
- Shift your words in your sentences so that the most important word comes at the very end.
- Read your draft out loud in a slow manner.

However, I recommend outlining both at the beginning and at the end of what you draft. Outlining at the start can help you focus and spend less time in the editing room. Sure, outlining may inhibit creativity in favour of logic, but going into a writing session without a guide always proves cumbersome for me.

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.

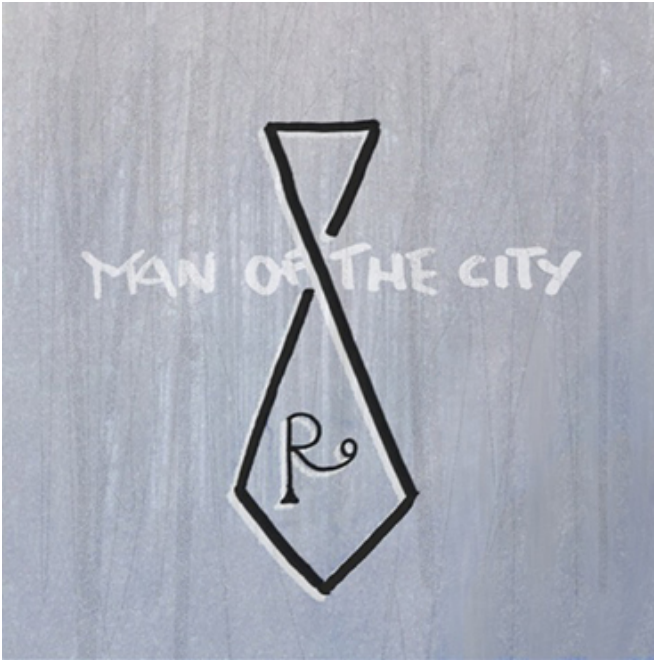
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Music Review

Reno McCarthy

Samantha Stevens



Artist: Reno McCarthy

EP: *Man of the City*

The creation of modern music is all about finding your own unique sound. That isn't as easy as it sounds, considering that every day we are constantly bombarded with whatever song happens to be at the top of the charts that week. However, despite this, solo musician Reno McCarthy has been able to create something that is inspired by pop, funk, jazz, and dance music, but transcends the typical sounds and has given life to something that is truly unique.

Man of the City is Reno McCarthy's latest EP, and features 5 tracks. Originally from Cambridge, UK, this 20-year-old musician left the UK to study at Montreal's music school, CEGEP de St-Laurent, as a jazz guitarist majoring in

classical composition. Inspired by bands like Coldplay, Rolling Stones, and Oasis, Reno's sound also resembles U2, Mobile, and David Bowie.

Driven by a desire to create music that is positive and upbeat, Reno focuses on sounds that will get people up and dancing. *Man of the City* includes a wide variety of instruments, many of which are played by Reno, who also writes, produces, and arranges all of his own songs. In addition to recording, Reno plays live at several venues around Montreal and will be playing in Ottawa, Montreal, and Kingston this month. Be sure to check out locations and times on his [website](#) if you live one of these cities and are interested in checking Reno out live.

"Just About To Get Happy" and "So" are my favourite tracks on *Man of the City*. "Just About To Get Happy" features slightly muted vocals reminding me of U2 and Coldplay. But the strong jazz and funk influence is so incredible and different that I couldn't help but love this song. Given the title of the track and the upbeat funk rhythm you will find yourself moving to the steady beat and the song goes on. As the album moves onto the next track you can definitely feel yourself growing happier.

"So" includes some very strong pop influences, but the rhythm is closer to that of modern dance music. The synthesizers also add a level of jazz and classic rock to the song, with the resulting sound being so different from anything out there that it is almost impossible to effectively describe the music. The vocals are a combination of the typical U2 singing style with something different, something that reminds me of early Goo Goo Dolls. "So" is definitely my favourite track on *Man of the City*.

Overall, Reno did a fantastic job on his latest EP. He features many of his diverse abilities as a musician and showcases his amazing talent. *Man of the City* is available online on Reno's website, bandcamp, and iTunes.

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

The Mindful Bard

Angej

Wanda Waterman

A Musical Guilty Pleasure From the Indian Diaspora

Album: [Angej](#)

Artist: Amrinder Gill

"Bhangra, if one would technically break it down, it is a male folk dance. It is a very specific rhythm, actually. So what is considered bhangra today is one of many rhythms, not exactly the bhangra rhythm. But as language evolves, culture moves forward, things start to mean other things. So bhangra has become sort of a ubiquitous term to describe a certain style of music and it's definitely a battleground for tradition versus modernity."

- [Rekha Malhotra, New York-based DJ](#)

Angej is actually the soundtrack to a [film](#) of the same name (the word means "good man") starring Amrinder Gill, about a rural family in the Punjab in the 1940's. The album starts out with a beautifully tender song, "Mil Ke Baithrange;" not knowing Punjabi, I have no idea what it's about, but I remember hearing [Stacey Kent](#) saying how much she'd enjoyed listening to Brazilian songs even before she'd studied Portuguese and knew what the words were saying. The same holds true here; "Mil Ke

Baithrange" is so full of the assurance of grace and a sense of "God's-in-His-heaven" that it can draw you out of a slump quicker than strawberry shortcake, even if you don't know its subject matter.

The dance pieces, especially "Chete Kar Kar Ke," sometimes sound like Egyptian chaabi and Maghrebian mezwed music in that they start out slow and even ominous and build in intensity until you sense the need for dance catharsis.

Weirdly enough, some claim that bhangra, as such, doesn't exist in India, although it was inspired by a longstanding tradition of male harvest dancing in the Punjab. It was a kind of musical experiment carried out by a number of Punjab immigrants to Britain in the eighties, musicians who had the amazing good fortune of living in a country where distance between gigs was minimal, Indian weddings were a steady recurrence, and everyone was hiring musicians to play live at their weddings. Because of this, the genre enjoyed a success in Britain which wasn't possible in the vast stretches between North American communities of Indians, even though bhangra still won a large following in Canada and the United States due to airplay.

Master world music syncretist [Greg Herriges](#) once confessed to me that bhangra was one of his "guilty pleasures"—guilty, I'm assuming, because it's a very popular musical and dance form that doesn't demand a great deal of musical or dance expertise to create, play, boogie down to, or just plain adore. If you love music and haven't heard of Indian bhangra, this will be a changing day for you.

Bhangra is deliciously difficult to define. It's still a tradition in flux, and developments are still being added, making it a very creative syncretism as both music and dance.



And before you folk Nazis start dismissing it as "not really folk" because it was developed outside India, let me remind you that, immigration being a salient aspect of Indian life today, bhangra is the best evidence that a culture can thrive by seizing on any circumstances and making the most of available conditions to meet its own creative necessity.

The demand for the bhangra genre has been usurped to some degree by the more recently popularised Punjab folk music, a sound whose tradition and purity has its merits but which—sorry—can't really supplant the joyful expression of urban Indian immigrant identity that we find in bhangra. If you're an artist looking for creative inspiration, a lift, an emotional high, or just a regenerative escape, I can't recommend bhangra more.

And if you're looking for a fun fitness routine, just type "bhangra dance" into Youtube and look up some lessons. Your booty will thank you.

Angrej manifests three of The Mindful Bard's criteria for music well worth a listen.

- It's authentic, original, and delightful.
- It provides respite from a cruel world, a respite enabling me to renew myself for a return to mindful artistic endeavor.
- It makes me appreciate that life is a complex and rare phenomena, making living a unique opportunity.

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

Student Sizzle AU's Hot Social Media Topics

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

AUSU Student Forums

The 2015 By-Election forum bustles with discussion threads inquiring into candidates' opinions on such topics as councillor remuneration, challenges and strategies, and transparency.

Elsewhere, in the Business and Administration course discussion forum, Bizzyb posts some advice on courses CMNS 315 and 380.

AthaU Facebook Group

Donald seeks input on whether to choose FNCE 300 or 370. Kristin wonders how long the process takes after submitting an application to graduate.

Other posts include exam scheduling, rhetorical analysis, and courses ENGL 316, HUMN 201, PSYC 345 and WGST 401.

Twitter

@AthabascaUSU (AUSU) tweets: "IT'S COMING...SOON!! <http://ow.ly/QV9yE> #AthaU #AthabascaU #mentalhealth" and "Don't forget to check out the candidates for the 2015 AUSU By-election! Voting starts Aug 21. <http://ow.ly/QV8FP> #AthabascaU #AthaU."



In Conversation

With Vinyette, Part I

Wanda Waterman



Vinyette is an indie rock quartet based in New York City. Their recent single, "Charlie," is a hard-driving protest song about love gone bad, a song (reminiscent of the grunge exuberance of the Red Hot Chili Peppers) that's also a paean of praise to an American gypsy girl, named Charlie, who dances to her own drummer. Last year the band members quit their jobs for a four month tour that took them from California to Europe (they opened for Marky Ramone and Andrew W.K. in the Czech Republic). Recently lead singer Nathan Frye and drummer Jonathan Crowley took the time to answer Wanda Waterman's questions about their musical

backgrounds

What role did music play in your childhood? And how did this lead to a preference for grunge?

NATHAN FRYE: I'm proud to say that all the band mates have healthy artistic, intellectual, and musical backgrounds. My father played in classic rock-styled bands as a singer and rhythm guitarist. I have a large family, many of which sing in some fashion. If I may name drop a moment, my cousin Rainey Qualley was just named one of Rolling Stone's top 10 up and coming country singers of 2015.

Lots of musicians as well in my family. My stepfather is a jazz guitarist who graduated from Berklee College of Music.

It all started for me because my mother loves to sing along with her record player. She played artists like the Beatles, Steely Dan, and Joni Mitchell. Going to live concerts is my favorite way of connecting with others. It feels spiritual; even just listening to music is a release that nurtures the soul. I think it just happens—our whole band likes making music that may (or may not) fit in the grunge genre. We're just gonna play what we love.

JONATHAN CROWLEY: I grew up listening to Clapton and Little Feat via my dad who, like me, played the trumpet and drums. My uncle was a composer, and both my grandmothers were singers and pianists. I still listen to the classical music that reminds me of them.

I think we all turned to grunge at some point because it had so much power behind it. The same way the past generations turned to punk, grunge seemed to be our generation's version of that. Just something that smacked you in the face and did what it wanted.

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

NATHAN FRYE: My biggest influence was undeniably Jim Morrison. He attended the same high school I did, so his writings and the music of the Doors were my earliest and most positive influences musically. I dreamed of doing what Jim did, but I wanted to survive it. Jim was really good at riling people up and manipulating crowds. I think he yearned for more introspection out of society in his time, so he strived to inspire such.

I'm interested in the betterment of myself and the world as we know it. I think inspiring introspection is a great step in the right direction. That urge for positivity is more of an influence from my mother.

What was the most mesmerizing musical experience of your life?

NATHAN FRYE: I can't name just one, which makes me feel lucky. Most of those experiences have occurred with my band in rehearsal. There's nothing like cutting your way into the thick of that bramble and discovering the juiciest berries.

JONATHAN CROWLEY: I remember listening to one of our early rehearsals, when we were playing nine-minute pieces that never repeated any sections. It just struck me that our music was a key. To open any door we wanted. I've had so many epiphanies through music. Most are difficult to put into words. Hopefully they come out in our music.

Has anything funny or bizarre ever happened to the band?

JONATHAN CROWLEY: Oh man, I don't know where to begin. We laugh a hell of a lot on the road. We're just kids out there, enjoying everything we can. Bizarre is our normal ...

(to be continued)

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: Students Seeking Bankruptcy Advice

The CIBC has found that nearly half of all students worry about being able to cover both loans and living expenses, and a Calgary bankruptcy advisor is seeing more students coming to his office because of high levels of debt, according to a recent [article](#) on CBC. With over 36% of students expecting to graduate owing over \$25,000.00, their ability to drive the economy forward will be severely compromised.

Around the Globe: Degree Creep a Reality in the UK

A recent study done in the UK has found that over 58.8% of university graduates are in jobs that do not require graduate level skills. The chief executive of the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD), Peter Cheese, stated in an [article](#) on the BBC that this should be "a wake-up call," and that

"the assumption that we will transition to a more productive, higher-value, higher-skilled economy just by increasing the conveyor belt of graduates is proven to be flawed."

The report found that employers are increasingly requesting degrees for traditionally non-graduate roles despite there being no change in the skills needed for the role. The trend was particularly noticable in the construction and manufacturing sectors, with degrees increasingly being required rather than apprenticeships.

Get Out and Vote

Deanna Roney



With the world being filled with various politicians campaigning, and our own student union running an election, I think it is important to stop and consider the power of our single vote.

While politics are not my strong suit, I never miss an opportunity to have my say; whether voting in town elections, federal government, provincial government, or student unions. Our right to vote should not be taken lightly. It was not that long ago that a large portion of the population could not vote. Even today Canadian citizens who live out of country are fighting to keep their political voice through their vote. According to a friend who has decided to live and work out of country, she was informed that she was ineligible to vote in the upcoming federal election. It was impressed on me from a young age the importance of voting; since turning 18 I have

never missed an opportunity to have my say.

I have seen a few cartoons showing statistics of voter turnout, which has been poor in the last few elections. A sentiment I often hear is that people figure their single vote will not make a difference. But, consider, if you are thinking that, how many others are thinking the same thing? If everyone who was eligible to vote turned out to vote the political world could change. If everyone stopped being passive observers about the way that the government (or student union) was being run, and took their opportunity to vote, a change could be made.

A way that it was described to me, was a single ant may not be able to achieve something on their own, but a whole colony of ants can move the world. In numbers we have power. In sheer volume of voters we should be able to have an influence on how the government (or student union) will be run in the future. And if each of us who believes in the importance of voting discusses this with one person who is passive and convinces them of the importance of voting, then we have made a difference. The way in which they vote is not important (nor anyone else's business) but that they used their vote.

When I met my husband he did not believe his voice would make a difference; he did not participate in the voting process. We had many debates about it. I was not going to drag him into the voting centre if he really did not want to, but I was going. It is important to me, especially as a woman, to not let the sacrifices of those before me go to waste, to not toss my vote aside like it is meaningless. Since our debates, my husband has become active in voting and making sure his voice is heard, he also discusses the importance of voting with others and has convinced a few that they should make their voice heard. If everyone who does not normally use their vote uses their vote now, then, through sheer mass, those single votes will matter.

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



Dear
Barb

Barbara Godin

Time Changes

Dear Barb:

My boyfriend and I just moved in together. We both always wanted a Golden Retriever so when the opportunity arose we bought one. Unfortunately we had a trip planned and were hoping we could pick up the dog after we got back, but the breeder told us we had to take the pup right away, so we did. We brought Sasha home to meet our family and my grandma fell in love with her and offered to watch her while we are on our trip. My boyfriend and I were happy about that, as we were going to have to put her in a Kennel. The problem is that was a couple of months ago and in the meantime Sasha has grown tremendously and is almost 50 pounds now. My grandma dropped in for a visit as she hadn't seen us for a while and she was very surprised at the size of Sasha. A couple of days later I received a text from my grandma saying she couldn't watch Sasha because she felt she would be too much for her to handle, as she has two very old and sickly Pomeranians. My boyfriend and I were quite upset as we can't get her into the kennel now. I think my grandmother should have told me earlier or she should live up to her word and take Sasha for the week. I am really angry at her and haven't spoken to her since. What do you think? Thanks Kristen.

Hi Kristen:

It seems neither you, your boyfriend or your grandmother gave a lot of thought to how quickly puppies grow. There really is no point in being angry at your grandmother, that won't change things, you have to accept that your grandmother is unable to watch Sasha and make other arrangements. I'm sure

your grandmother had the best of intentions and just wanted to be helpful. On the other hand you must have known that your grandmother had two sickly dogs, so I guess you weren't thinking either. Just move forward from this and appreciate your grandmother's offer to help. I hope you enjoy your vacation.

Dear Barb:

I have been married for five years. When we got married my husband treated me like a Queen, now he ignores me most of the time. For example, he used to let me pick all the movies we watched and plan our vacations. I managed the money and was able to buy whatever I wanted. He used to rub my feet every night and serve me drinks and snacks. Now he almost seems like he is angry at me and I don't understand why. Don't you think if men want to be happy they should make their wives happy first? Like Dr. Phil says, "If momma ain't happy, nobody's happy! Patricia

Hi Patricia:

Marriage is a 50/50 partnership; it's not all about one person making the other happy. Firstly each person is responsible for making themselves happy. Your husband should not be expected to wait on you, nor should you be expected to wait on him. You can both work together in a partnership, taking into account each other's thoughts and feelings. I think you are taking Dr. Phil's comment literally and I don't think that was how it was meant. Thanks for writing in, hope I was able to help.

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.

CHAZZ BRAVADO: WOMEN RANGERS



Yes, two women have just made history by passing the grueling demands of America's Ranger School. Bravo, chickypoops!

For sure, The Chazz Man wouldn't want to be on a wilderness mission with a babe when that-time-of-the-month arrives and she gets all grouchy and weepy. Who's the real soldier, THEN, eh?

Having said that, it does my heart good to see cute patookuses waddling through the hinterlands weighted down by 60-pound rucksacks. It's why I love hiking! Or rather, sitting in the woods . . .

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 were emailed to all subscribed AUSU members at 12:01am MST on August 21.

The results of the election will be officially announced during a Special Meeting of Council on Thursday, August 27 at 11am MST. All members are welcome to attend this meeting – just email admin@ausu.org to RSVP.

Following the Special Meeting of Council, the results will then be posted on the AUSU website, social media, September newsletter, and right here in the Voice. You will also be able to log back into the election site to view the results.

For more information visit the AUSU 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 Health & Dental Plan

The **AUSU Health and Dental Plan** was developed for our members who cannot afford commercial plans. The AUSU plan doesn't require that you study full-time, and does not exclude pre-existing conditions like commercial plans do. And, if you don't want it, you can simply select "no" when the plan is offered, and you won't be asked to provide proof of alternative coverage.

To qualify: you must enroll in 6 or more AU undergrad credits in a 12 month period, live in Canada, and be under the age of 70.

The cost: The plan costs just \$325 for a full year

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

Student Lifeline Launch

Our new **Student Lifeline Mental Health & Wellness** program launches **September 1!**

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

AUSU Health & Dental Plan

Check out this month's ASUSU [Executive Blog](#), written by the AUSU President!

CLASSIFIEDS

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

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

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