

# THE VOICE

## MAGAZINE

Vol 23 Issue 48 2015-12-11

### Meeting the Minds

Dr. William Diehl-Jones

### A Complicated Holiday

When you can't Celebrate.

### A Time for Goodwill to All

The Spirit of the Band

*Plus:*

*Taking AU Out of the Closet*

*The Difference a Wedding Makes  
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](mailto:voice@voicemagazine.org), and please indicate if we may publish your letter.**

## EDITORIAL

### Here it Comes!

Karl Low



There's only two weeks until another Christmas is upon us. That means that there's only one more issue of *The Voice Magazine* that will be published this year. Only one more that you need to take into consideration for your pick for the Best of the Voice issue, which will be showing up in January. Was there something last year that stood out? A story that pulled at your heart or had you nodding? If so, we want to hear about it so that we can give it the attention it deserves! Write us at [voice@voicemagazine.org](mailto:voice@voicemagazine.org) with your picks.

Of course, you may wonder at my use of the word "Christmas", perhaps you assume it means I hold some religious feelings, or that I'm not exhibiting proper sensitivity to other religions. But honestly, it really more comes from the idea that that is what the season, for the vast bulk of North Americans, is called. Like it or not, believe in it or not, our society is based on the Christian religion in a lot of ways, and, personally, I think to deny that is simply being disingenuous. When I use the word Christmas, I'm not acknowledging any religion—I don't have one. I'm too firm a believer in science and evolution to feel that Christianity holds any benefit for us, but it's still part of our history, and the word is not an attack on any other religion, any more than speaking of Kwanzaa is an attack on Christianity.

Plus, I'm a firm believer in the idea that words have power. I wouldn't do this job if I didn't. One of the powers that words have is to allow us to identify and examine concepts. When we prevent a word from being used, we are, in essence, preventing people from examining the concepts behind them. But people should be examining the concepts behind Christmas. Much of it is stuff that our society simply needs more of.

Huh. Okay, so I had a bit of a rant built up on that issue, it seems.

Getting back to this issue, our Meeting The Minds feature is bringing us a research board member that the Children's Hospital Institute of Manitoba, Dr. William Diehl-Jones. He has taught some of the higher level nursing courses at AU, and is currently designing two new courses for the nurse practitioner program at AU.

Our cover article this week is Carla Knipe's "A Complicated Holiday" a look at what happens when life intervenes with the expected feelings of joy that the season is supposed to bring. It's a personal story, about a secret club that nearly everyone ends up belonging to at one time or another, and how you cope when reality stands in the way of expectations.

Also in tune with the season, Samantha Stevens has given us a look at how independent band Lipstick is getting into the spirit of Christmas. And, of course, we have our selection of interviews, reviews, advice, and other articles to keep you busy and in touch with what's going on with other AU Students. So enjoy the read!

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



# MEETING THE MINDS

## INTERVIEWS with AU's EDUCATORS



*Dr. William Diehl-Jones is an associate professor of nursing with AU's Faculty of Health Sciences, and sits on the research committee for the Children's Hospital Research Institute of Manitoba. Recently, he took time out of his busy schedule to do this interview for The Voice Magazine*

**Marie: What are some of your most memorable awards, positions, or acclamations?**

I think my most memorable award was the Distinguished Teacher Award from the University of Waterloo. I have received four different teaching awards, but that one meant so much because it was totally student-driven. That was a validation, in a way, of my teaching; you receive the bricks often enough, but you don't always receive the bouquets. It's nice to get a bouquet once in a while.

**Marie: Just by talking with you, you can tell you'd be the kind of teacher who would win awards.**

I don't know. (Laughs.) Depends on who you speak to. I tend to polarize students. They see me either as somebody they like as a teacher or somebody who is just a tough nut. I do enjoy the challenge of making learning fun, although.

I think my best acclamation is, well, I've got several university degrees, but my best—*my best*—acclamation is being a registered nurse.

Of course, the position I love is the one at Athabasca as an Associate Professor. I also enjoy my position as a research scientist at the Children's Hospital Research Institute, Manitoba. A balance between teaching and research is what I strive to achieve.

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

The three courses I taught at Athabasca are 518 (Health Assessment), 519 (Pathophysiology), and 521 (Pharmacology). All of these courses are offered in the Nurse Practitioner program at AU, which is the largest such program in Canada.

I'm designing two new courses that are launching in January. These are combined pathophysiology/pharmacology courses, designed to better integrate pathophysiology with clinical pharmacology. The course designations are NURS 516 and NURS 517, and I am just finishing up the study guide for NURS 516.

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

I think the primary challenge is to making a personal connection with students. I am more than the email address or a faceless presence on a computer screen, I still teach in person, which I enjoy, and I really that immediacy to on-line teaching. It's been challenging to do this online, but it is still very possible. It just depends on how inventive you can be.

That's the challenge, and I think the highlight is meeting students, many for the first time, at convocation. I've been to six different university convocations, and I think AU's got the best one, hands down. They do it really well, and I get a chance to meet a lot of my nurse practitioner students there and to hear some of their stories as they walk across the stage.

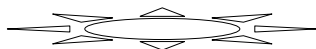
**Marie: How do you aim to stimulate student motivation in online learning environments?**

I think one of the ways to do that online is to always ask the "so what?" question. If I am able to articulate the "so what?" piece, or explain "why you should care about this?", then I think I have been able to stimulate and motivate. Especially in clinical courses, it is important for students to be able to see the relevance of the material.

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

Well, I think it has to be structured and constructive. Not just "what did you do wrong?", but "What did you do right?" as well as "How can you improve?". There's always room for improvement.

I'll do that in written form, and on the phone. My favorite medium is through Adobe Connect sessions where we can speak face-to-face, dissect an exam or assignment, while reinforcing the learning points that they did internalize while analyzing what might have gone wrong.



### Study Tips from a Semi-Anonymous Friend

#### Writing a Dissertation in a Snap

*There is nothing more that The Study Dude wants for you than to write books in less time than it takes you to snap your fingers.*

*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 Study Dude article continue with part three of *Demystifying Dissertation Writing* by Peg Boyle Single, PhD. In today's article, Peg Boyle Single will show you how easy it is to

write books with her Single System.

## Changing a Focus Statement into a One-Page Outline

When in graduate studies, I never knew the difference between a thematic dissertation versus an article dissertation, yet these differences could result in completely unique one page outlines at the start of your dissertation project. Different disciplines have different structures for your dissertation, so it's important to find out which format might be most palatable to your field. Whichever starting format you use will define the basic skeleton of your one-page outline.

In graduate studies, I started with chapter headings that included an introduction, a literature review, methodology, theory, results, and a conclusion. By placing this structure on a printed document, at least I had a starting point. Yet, moving forward challenged me. No-one had told me that writing the dissertation was as simple as breaking the dissertation into five chapters, each with five sections, each with five subsections. How simple.

So, what do you do once you know your chapter headings? And how do you take your focus statement and fit it into a guiding one-page outline?

Peg Boyle Single has some advice for getting your one-page outline ready.

- Rely on an auto-generated table of contents to give your book or dissertation a structure. Microsoft Word has this functionality built in, for instance.
- Get a working title as soon as you can. The working title will help guide your topic, and you can always change it later on. After the working title, insert your focus statement, which is kind of like a thesis, but also touches on your methodology and theories.
- Create chapter titles and make a bulleted list of subjects you want to discuss in each chapter.
- Be sure to get approval and suggested revisions from your advisor.
- The format of your thesis should help structure your chapter headings. For instance, if you choose to perform a thematic dissertation, start with an introduction, end with a conclusion, and have three different themes as your chapter headings.
- Another format, the typical social sciences format, will have an introduction, a literature review, a methods section, a results chapter, and a conclusion.
- Yet another format, a journal article format for your dissertation will have an introduction, a literature review, a conclusion, and three or so chapters that could be published as straight-out journal articles.
- Five chapters to your dissertation is the typical number.
- Ask yourself questions, such as what is the key idea? Why is this important? What resources am I referencing? What will motivate me to write your dissertation when I feel like giving up? What groundwork do I have for your topic? What gap will my dissertation fill? What methodology and theories will I use? What findings do I anticipate? These questions will help you think through your dissertation outline. Take these answers and put them into your outline wherever they might apply.
- Under each chapter, write a mini focus statement, specific to that chapter.
- For each chapter heading (which are first level headings in MS Word), come up with three to five main ideas you wish to discuss. These main ideas become your section headings, or second level headings. For each section, come up with three to five subtopics to discuss. These subtopics become your third level headings.
- Put your citeable notes (the quotes you wish to use) under each relevant heading. Don't worry about the order of the quotes, you will later reorganize them for optimal flow.
- In your computer generated table of contents, use, at minimum, two heading levels, so that you can easily print out your TOC and quickly identify your paper's structure.

## Transforming Your One-Page Outline into A Long Outline, Polished with References

In graduate school, I stared down at my document, marked with several chapter headings and nothing else. I was unsure of how to proceed. I think feeling overwhelmed is commonplace for anyone during the initial stages of writing a book, making a course, or doing anything that requires the organization of a ton of material.

Also, while in graduate school, I stopped using outlines or cue cards for organizing my references on the advice of a professor. This professor wanted to stop me in my tracks from taking extensive cue card notes as she felt the process was too time consuming. But, those cue cards contained all of my references and enabled me to organize the quotes in a flash. Her advice was ill-conceived. With a cue card or outline system in place, writing an essay is streamlined.

Since then, I've tried writing books. My latest endeavour didn't rely on a well-structured outline created in advance. I just added topics as they came to mind and wrote on them: big mistake. The longer the document grew and the more time that lapsed between writing sessions, the more muddled the endeavour became.

Yet, how do you craft an outline for a project as sizeable as a book? Peg Boyle Single has the perfect system. Just think in clusters of three to five. If you can do that, you can succeed remarkably at writing a book or dissertation of any length.

- Your one-page outline should contain a title, a focus statement, plus five chapters, each with its own focus statement, and a list of three to five sections within each chapter.
- To rehash, you have five chapters, each with a focus statement and five sections. Five seems to be the magical number in Peg's system.
- Of the five sections, give each around five subsections (three to five). Give your sections and subsections a logical order. So, to rehash, you have five chapters, each with five sections, each with five subsections. That's all.
- Get approval from your advisor on the long outline.
- Ensure that each subheading advances the focus statement of the chapter and reflects nicely on the section heading.
- Estimate page lengths for each section and subsection and document them.
- Type in your citable notes under the relevant headings, without worrying too much about order. Keep a miscellaneous section for citable notes without an obvious home.
- After you get your chapter headings, section heading, and subsection headings, insert your citable notes. Organize the citable notes logically.
- When you notice that parts of your long outline lack sufficient quotes, go back to the books to find quotes to fatten up those subsections. Where your long outline has oodles of information for a subsection, you likely can stop researching in that area.

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

Single, Peg Boyle. 2010. *Demystifying Dissertation Writing*. Stirling, Virginia: Stylus Publishing.



## In Conversation with Sunny Gang, Part IV

Wanda Waterman



*Sunny Gang - Photo by Mel D. Cole*

*Sunny Gang is a lively thrash-punk-rap outfit based in New York, known for inspired (and inspiring) rap with a zealous rock ambience. Fronted by rapper Nasty Nate, other members include Chris Bacchus on guitar, Joe Sap on bass, and Marshal on drums. Sunny Gang just released "[Godzilla](#)", a single from their album, *Party/Animal*. Recently the band took the time to answer Wanda Waterman's questions about their views on New York, literary inspirations, and artistic mission statements. (See the first part of this interview [here](#), the second part [here](#), and the third part [here](#).)*

**Is New York an exciting city for a musician?**

CHRIS BACCHUS: New York is so diverse

and its music scene follows the same fashion. You can walk down the street and just pop into a few bars and see an array of different musical genres. I do find the New York music scene to be very cliquey, but the more I think about it, that's present in any metropolitan hub.

JOE SAP: I love working in New York because you're constantly finding yourself in front of a different kind of crowd. We've shared stages and audiences with everything from punk bands like Cerebral Ballzy to throwback hip-hop acts like Pastor Troy. It keeps you on your toes, as a band, because you have to learn to tailor your set to your audience a little. That constant flux in crowds informs our writing too; we'll step back and realize, "we've got too many hard, fast songs— let's write a few things that are a little more laid back and rap-oriented."

MARSHAL: There's such a large music scene here that it becomes a little overwhelming for both the artists and the fans at times. There have been times when it can feel competitive to me as both a performer and a spectator due simply to the oversaturation. I would never say it's a bad thing, but there have definitely been times when it's been hard to decide which gigs to go to, either to perform at or to watch.

NASTY NATE: I personally think it's really saturated so it's hard to stand out. Also I feel like there's a lot of expectation to sound a certain way, and when you break that, people sometimes get turned off. New Jersey is way more underground anyway. I like New York but it gets old real quick.

**Why did you call your debut LP "*Party/Animal*?"**

CHRIS BACCHUS: It's the juxtaposition that exists in our music. We love making party music that's fun and leaves people with smiles on their faces. We also love making serious music that comments on society. We don't want to be that band that only wants to crush beers, but we also don't want to be that band that's angry about everything in the world. I feel like this album is a great balance of our capabilities as musicians and songwriters.

JOE SAP: The album is also essentially split down the middle, almost as if it were on a vinyl record, the first half being the "Party" side, featuring most of our fun, lighter, "lets get drunk" songs. The second half is the "Animal" side, which is a bit heavier, more political, and more intricate in the songwriting. The songs on the Animal side actually all flow together musically, and it's kind of constructed as one solid "song cycle."

**In "Godzilla" there's a mention of "revolutionary suicide." What does that mean?**

NASTY NATE: It comes from Huey Newton. When he was locked up he refused to work and eat, so he was put in solitary confinement and not fed. His prison mates said, "Man you're gonna die. You're committing suicide."

His response was, "You've committed suicide also," i.e. by accepting the system and the way it dehumanizes prisoners. They were also giving up their humanity in a way that the system promoted, continuing the status quo. Newton called that "systematic suicide," letting your humanity die because the system says it has to.

What Newton did, he called *revolutionary* suicide because it was his choice and not the system's choice. By rebelling against the system, he was "committing suicide" in an effort to change the status quo, as opposed to letting it roll on. So the full line really is "revolutionary suicide—we die before they change," meaning that sacrificing your own life is sometimes a necessary evil for creating a greater change.

**Are there any books, films, or albums that have inspired you?**

NASTY NATE: *Revolutionary Suicide*. Fanon's *The Wretched Earth*. Run The Jewels. The movie *Burn*. Rage Against the Machine.

CHRIS BACCHUS: Metallica's *Kill 'Em All*, Children of Bodom's *Hate Crew Deathroll* and Black Sabbath's *Paranoid* have played crucial roles in sculpting my guitar playing and providing inspiration. Some books that have really stuck with me are Peter Guralnick's *Escaping the Delta: Robert Johnson and the Invention of the Blues* and *Ishmael* by Daniel Quinn.

JOE SAP: *Riders on the Storm: My Life With Jim Morrison and the Doors* by (Doors drummer) John Densmore was a pretty fascinating and inspiring read. He details how The Doors came to be a band and how they found success. I think about them a lot, because just like with Nate, Jim Morrison was not a traditional singer. He was actually a poet before joining The Doors. So it's interesting to see how a band with an unconventional approach to rock music was able to make it.

As far as albums go, I don't even know where to start. My playing style is very heavily influenced by Geezer Butler of Black Sabbath and Jack Bruce of Cream. Those were two guys who I really looked up to when I was first getting into the bass. There was a time where I knew about half of the songs from Cream's *Disraeli Gears* and *Wheels of Fire* albums.

But I've always been into hip-hop as well; one of the first things I ever taught myself was the bassline from Biggie's "Hypnotize." As far as our approach to making music as a band goes, I look back to Rage Against The Machine's first record a lot.

MARSHAL: NINE INCH NAILS. The Offspring. *Brave New World*. *The Painted Bird*. *Captive Women VI*. Zach Hill. Dave Grohl. Wavves. Kurt Vonnegut. George Orwell. Nirvana. The Bloodhound Gang. Myself.

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

CHRIS BACCHUS: Lose the ego and be open to criticism. No one goes anywhere thinking they're the best. Listen and learn, let your music speak for you to a point where you don't have to flex your "muscles" on Twitter.

JOE SAP: Try everything. Never say "no" to an idea until you know for a fact that it sucks and won't work. Dare to attempt something that nobody else is doing.

MARSHAL: Save the planet; kill yourself.

NASTY NATE: Don't be ignorant and pretend like fucked-up shit doesn't exist in this world. And don't be so negative, thinking that everything in the world is fucked up. Have fun but be conscious of the world.

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

## Taking AU Out of the Closet

Barbara Lehtiniemi



As an AU student, do you ever find yourself apologizing for your choice of university? After explaining that you go to AU, do you brace yourself for puzzled looks and dumb-ass questions? (My favourite is, "Where is Athabasca University?")

Perhaps anticipating awkward questions or the need to explain, some AU students keep their student status in the closet. It's just easier. Astonishingly few people seem to understand, yes, it's a real university with real students taking real courses working toward real degrees.

Students' reticence to open up about Athabasca, however, just exacerbates the problem. Ignorance and misperceptions exist in an information vacuum. The more we share AU with others, the more others will understand AU. And, once they gain understanding, perhaps they'll want to attend AU, too.

I've started taking AU out of my closet—literally. I have a couple of AU shirts I purchased from the [UR Store](#), and one more is on the way. The shirts—three different styles, three different colours—

were my little rewards for reaching AU milestones: to celebrate completing my first course, my first A+, and finishing a truly tortuous course.

The URstore is Athabasca University's "Official Online Apparel Store." They stock shirts, shorts, pants, and outerwear in men's, women's, and kid's sizes. Most styles offer a variety of colours and logo designs. The URstore also has a line of AU accessories, including backpacks, sport bags, blankets, and umbrellas.

I wear my AU apparel for two reasons. First, wearing clothing with the AU logo helps *other* students come out of the closet. We students have very few ways of identifying each other, but if one student is wearing their school's logo, it invites other students to connect with them. I've worn AU shirts in different social settings and the AU logo has sparked some interesting conversations with both students and non-students. I even discovered that someone I knew was taking courses at AU, too.

The second reason for wearing an AU shirt is to display pride in my school. The quality fabric, flattering styles, and snappy logo just scream quality education. Why would a student buy such apparel unless they valued the school whose logo graces it? Each time I wear an AU shirt I'm encouraging other people to check out AU, too.

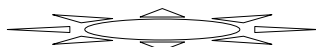
Logo apparel is such an effective marketing tool, AU should consider giving each student—or at least each funding-critical Alberta student—a free shirt to increase enrolment. More students at AU means more courses, more programs, and greater sustainability. When I enrolled at a bricks and mortar university, I not only got a t-shirt, but a backpack full of swag. I haven't even received a keychain or coffee mug from AU (yet.)

While you're waiting for AU to contemplate this brilliant marketing strategy—if, indeed, they are even *contemplating* contemplating it—you can fill your closet with AU-wear on your own. Then take AU out of your

closet and proclaim to the world that you are an AU student! You might be surprised to find who else you know has been waiting to come out of the AU closet, too.

To order AU apparel or accessories from the URstore, visit [urstore.ca/schools/ca/alberta/athabasca/athabasca-university](http://urstore.ca/schools/ca/alberta/athabasca/athabasca-university). For information on ordering, visit the [FAQ](#) page. Prices include taxes but not shipping; delivery to Canadian addresses only.

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



## Extracurricular Geocaching

**Carla Knipe**



T Geocaching is now one of the most popular hobbies around. It requires minimal equipment, is a great way to get some exercise, and can be enjoyed by the entire family pretty much all year long. Best of all, there is the promise of finding a prize at the end!

The simple explanation of geocaching is that it is an outdoor game using a GPS-enabled device to use coordinates to navigate to and find "treasure" (the geocache). At first, geocaching was done with a handheld GPS, and many people still use them, but now participating is

extremely easy using a smartphone. Simply download the free app and you're ready to start. The geocache is a hidden container placed by another geocacher. Geocaches are never buried, but can be extremely sneaky to find. Visits to the cache are recorded either via a logbook or online. The cache also contains small treasures (known in geocaching terms as "swag"). The general rule of geocaching etiquette is that if you take a treasure you must leave something equal or better than the item taken. If you have nothing to trade, then etiquette dictates that you take nothing and simply sign the logbook. Dollar stores are great places for finding swag to place in the cache: hair barrettes, small toys, keychains, mini playing cards, brain teaser puzzles, and golf balls are just a few ideas. Many 'cachers also leave handmade items such as magnets and painted rocks. However, liquid items, such as bubble mixture, anything edible such as chocolate, or even bars of soap should not be left. If they leak, it could ruin the cache and they can also attract animals.

The main myth about geocaching is that it requires a lot of hiking in a remote area, but this isn't necessarily true. There are caches in wilderness areas including national and provincial parks, but there are also thousands of urban caches across both North America and internationally. You may have passed right by one without even knowing! Karen Ung, a Calgary outdoor writer and blogger (see her blog [playoutsideguide.com](http://playoutsideguide.com) for great information for getting families outdoors), regularly geocaches with her children both in Calgary and beyond. She says "Urban caching and rural caching are very similar - there are caches right on the side of the trail and others that require bushwhacking, so it is important to look at the difficulty and terrain ratings as well as the descriptions. Some will tell you the cache is 150 metres off trail, for example. In national parks, caches are



placed very close to the trail to prevent trail widening, so you can count on those to be fairly easy to find."

Geocaching is a great way to get used to hiking and navigating by using geographical landmarks. Geocaching in urban areas also has the appeal of being able to bring strollers and babies in carriers with you or the ability to travel to cache sites by bicycle. The best advice for beginners is to start out small and find easy caches (the app gives difficulty indicators) then work your way up. Make sure you always check the weather reports, dress sensibly with appropriate footwear and bring enough snacks, sunblock and water with you. Also, a good idea is to bring your own pen or pencil to fill in the logbook just in case the one in the cache is missing or unusable. Don't forget to snap a photo of your find and log it on the [geocaching.com](http://geocaching.com) website!

Karen Ung also says that geocaching etiquette for everyone is extremely important. "In town, respect private property. No shortcuts through people's yards--and always cross the road safely. Don't just follow your compass blindly across the street. And Geocaching is based on the honor system so, even though no one may be watching when you find the geocache, making good choices in making a trade [for items in the cache], and leaving the cache the way you found it is important." Something else that Geocachers can do is practice "cache in, trash out." Bring a garbage bag with you and pick up any litter that you see in order to be good stewards of the land and leave the area better than you found it.

Geocachers say that once you find your first few caches, you will be hooked. Admittedly, it is rather discouraging as a newbie to compare yourself with those who have been doing the hobby for a long time and have logged literally thousands of caches. Many serious Geocachers even plan vacations around their hobby. But, what matters most about this activity is that you learn some outdoor skills and explore neighbourhoods in a way that you would not have done otherwise. It is an activity that can be done either alone, with a family, or a larger group of people. Of course, finding the treasure is the bonus!

*Carla's family has just started to geocache. Their current logged cache total is in the single digits but hopefully that will soon change!*

## Student Sizzle

## AU's Hot Social Media Topics

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

### AthaU Facebook Group

Eli wants to know who to contact about inaccessible online study guides. Curtis seeks advice on how to upload multiple files for marking. JoAnne asks AU graduates to share where they are today.

Other posts include turnaround time for marking assignments, tuition refunds, persistent rumours, and courses GLST 483, HADM 331, MATH 215, NURS 434, and PSYC 323.

### Twitter

@AthabascaU tweets: "So this happened...thanks @EdmontonEsks @CFLPA & @CFL for bringing in the #GreyCup this morning - what a moment!"

@AthabascaUSU (AUSU) tweets: "Check out AUSU's article about our AU Students Mobile App in the Voice Magazine! <http://bit.ly/1XWrUIm>."

### Youtube

Posted by alexyouyou99: investigating auroras at "Athabasca University Observatory."

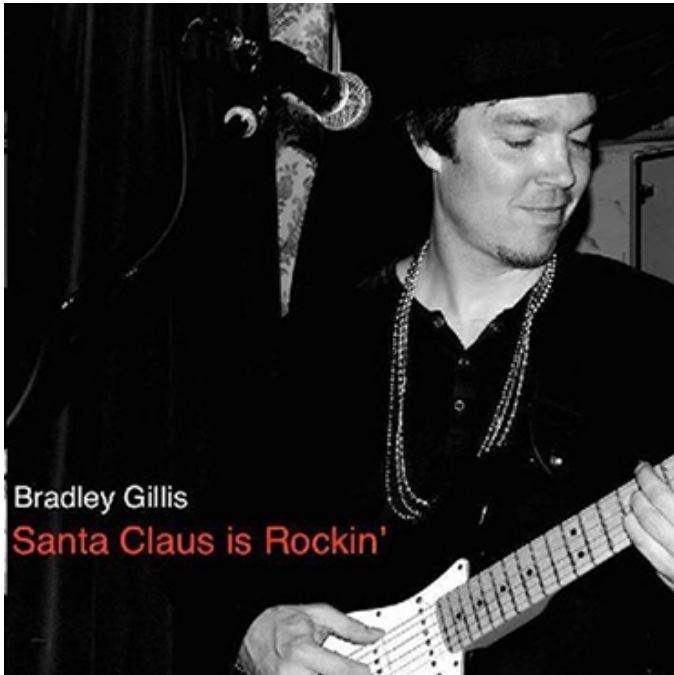




## Music Review

### Bradley Gillis

Samantha Stevens



**Artist:** Bradley Gillis

**Single:** "Santa Claus is Rockin'"

It's December and Christmas is drawing closer every day. People are putting up their Christmas trees, and festive decorations and lights bask the ever growing night in a warm and friendly glow. Some even have lots of snow and ice and are eager to get out and have some winter fun. The parties and gatherings are more frequent, and time spent with those most special to us becomes the focal point of our free time. It is all of these elements that make a fantastic Christmas song. Well, that and the big guy in the red suit. And Irish-based singer Bradley Gillis brings all of this together to create a new Christmas song that you really should add to your holiday playlist.

Originally from NYC, Bradley Gillis is now based in Ireland, where he met songwriter Glen Shire who wrote "Santa Claus is Rockin'." Produced by Simon Shire, the song includes the efforts of about 70 talented musicians, including the nationally renowned, award winning twenty piece children's choir Piccolo Lasso, an orchestral section, powerhouse backing singers and top Irish musicians/producers who have worked with Van Morrison, Genesis, The Cranberries, Andrew Lloyd-Webber, Westlife, Chris Rea, U2, Imelda May, Mike and the Mechanics, Riverdance and many more.

The accompanying music video, which can be found [here](#), was directed by Maurice Linnane, who has filmed documentaries for U2, The Cranberries, and Foo Fighters. The video is brilliant and features everything that you'd want to see in a Christmas video. Yet, what I loved most about the video was how Linnane captured all of the people working together to bring this song and video together. That is the essence of a true Christmas song, bringing people together.

"Santa Claus is Rockin'" also has lots of other sounds that inspire images and feelings of the wonder and excitement that surround the holiday season, especially for children. And is also intended to be a reminder for adults about what made the holidays so wonderful when they were children. The song is uplifting, playful, and fun, with a fusion of pop, jazz, and rock. Just what is needed at this time of year.

However, the song is also meant to remind listeners that there are many that aren't as fortunate and who find the holidays especially tough. Therefore, all proceeds from the song will be going to Ireland's largest children's charity, Barnardos. The message of cheer and goodwill is clear in the heartfelt creation and distribution of "Santa Claus is Rockin'," and I think that, considering that this song has been played on the radio in Ireland, the UK, US, and the Netherlands, the message is reaching wide and far.

So this holiday season, why not add a new Christmas song to compliment those old favourites, and give a little back in the process. "Santa Claus is Rockin'" can be purchased [here](#) for 1 Euro or \$1.45 CAD.

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

## Writer's Toolbox

### A Few of my Favorite Things

Christina M. Frey



Holiday shopping for a writer or editor? Or do you want to fill in your own wishlist (or find some new reading material for your holiday break)? These are a few of the editorial resources I've been obsessed with this year, both standbys that I couldn't live without and newly discovered books with fun or innovative takes on language. You know you want them all!

Katherine Barber, *Only In Canada, You Say*: Word lovers and Canadians—and most especially word-loving Canadians—will have a blast reading through this quick tour of Canadianisms and expressions. As a Canadian married to an American, I've been amazed to discover just how many of our unique terms never made it south of the border.

As a side note, I had the pleasure of meeting Katherine at the Editing Goes Global conference this past summer. She's quite gracious, and she knows her stuff—she's the former editor of the *Canadian Oxford Dictionary*.

Rachel Funk Heller, *The Writer's Coloring Book*: I met Rachel at the Writer's Digest conference and got to see a demo of her book. "Coloring book" is a bit of a simplistic way to describe a book that uses color and design to help you map your story's structure, plot, and characters. Whether or not you're a visual person, you'll appreciate the way it allows you to think through your story's organization in a whole new way.

Bryan Garner, *Garner's Modern American Usage*: Serious word nerds and editors need a copy of what we affectionately call *Garner's*, but a caution: it's easy to get lost in the intricacies of modern usage. Garner points out small differences and issues that even more experienced writers miss, but he also covers trends in modern language, explaining how formerly incorrect usage is now generally accepted.

Matthew Inman, *The Oatmeal poster collection*: Not books, but posters—and great ones (as long as crude language doesn't offend you). The Oatmeal uses his offbeat sense of humor to tackle grammar and usage in a series of hilarious posters. I promise you'll never misuse "literally" again!

Tony Preciado, *Super Grammar*: Yes, it's a comic book about grammar. Yes, commas and exclamation points are costumed superheroes. But don't laugh yet—this is one of the best basic grammar books I've come across, and I've seen a lot. It breaks down complex issues and explains grammatical concepts in a clear, accessible way. I recommend this one to all new authors regardless of age—and from time to time I consult it myself.

What are your favorite writing and/or editing resources? Send them my way, and perhaps they'll become my new go-tos for 2016!

*Christina M. Frey is a book editor, literary coach, and lover of great writing. For more tips and techniques for your toolbox, follow her on Twitter (@turntopage2) or visit her [blog](#).*

## A Time for Goodwill to All

Samantha Stevens



The holiday season always seems to bring people together. There are countless parties, festivals, gatherings, parades, and free concerts. It is also when selflessness is encouraged, and the flame of goodwill toward all mankind begins to grow especially brighter. Many people give a little extra money to charities they support, and others volunteer their time to share the holiday cheer with those less fortunate. The inspiration for people to give more to each other this time of year is my favourite part of the holiday season.

Recently, the glam-rock band, Lipstick, distributed a press release to announce their charity campaign going on for the month of December. If you recall, we reviewed Lipstick's debut album back in [May](#). Their

music is a ton of fun to listen to, and I am a huge fan of their work. So I was excited when I read about their amazing charity campaign. I got in touch with Greg Troyan, the frontman for the band, and here is what he said about their charity work.

### What inspired you and your band to do a charity campaign?

Lipstick has always been a band that has been proud of our charity work. We've played benefits for cancer research, child abuse awareness, hospice care: you name it. Two years back, we hosted a giant charity event called "Nashville Saves Christmas" where we gathered a bunch of great local bands and put on a gigantic stage musical. This year, we've been hard at work recording our next album, so we didn't have time to arrange an event that massive. We were looking at a few charity shows in our area, but nothing really clicked.

Then the attacks in Paris happened, and it was the same day we had a concert of our own in Nashville. The drummer for Eagles of Death Metal is a Nashville guy, and so I saw a ton of my friends in my Facebook newsfeed posting worried posts about him, because my friends were friends of his. It made the attacks much more real to me, and it made very upset. So, I talked with the guys, and we decided that we would do a charity campaign that would help victims of tragedies like that one. With the constant mass shootings in America too, we wanted to give money to an organization that would help in both our home country and foreign lands like France, and so the Red Cross became the obvious choice for the charity we wanted to give to.

### How does your campaign work?

We have a special edition of our debut album available in our merchandise store, and during the month of December, all of the profits from the sales of that album will go to the [International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies](#). The only money we'll keep from these album sales will be the costs of printing and shipping the album (if you choose to buy a physical copy), and the fees that Paypal charges for use of their service. Everything else will go directly to the Red Cross. We're a smaller, independent band, so we pay out-of-pocket to print our own CDs and ship them ourselves, but we want to do our part to help and we thought this would be a great way to do it.

If you're buying a digital copy of the album, obviously there's no charge for printing or shipping, so more of the money you spend will go directly to the charity. We know a lot of people like physical albums, because you can't

put an mp3 under your Christmas tree as easily as a CD, but as a thank you to the people buying the digital album, we have two additional bonus tracks from our friends in Nuclear Bubble Wrap. One of the songs is their big hit "Sharktopus", and another song is from their upcoming album.

We encourage everyone to donate to the Red Cross because they're a great organization that does a lot of good all over the world. If you want to buy a CD to give a gift to somebody for Christmas, or just want to download some cool music for yourself to listen to, you can do that while also helping out a great cause. And, if you think we suck, we encourage you to go the Red Cross website and donate anyway. Whatever way you decide to donate, we just encourage you to donate.

\*\*\*\*\*

For students, finances are often a touchy subject, so giving lots of money to charities isn't always realistic. But the band members of Lipstick and their friends show that it doesn't take much to give back, every little bit helps. There are many ways that everyone can give back to others this holiday season. Give up just a little bit of your free time to help out with a local charity. Go through your closet and find any clothes that you no longer wear and donate them. Even gently used books and many other items can be donated to a number of charities. The options to give back are endless. If you don't know of any charities in your area, check out [Charity Village](#) or [Charity Intelligence Canada](#).

It's great that a small, independent band like Lipstick and their friends are doing so much to help others this season. For another example of musicians coming together to give back this season, check out this week's music review.

So let's kindle those flames of goodwill to all this holiday season, and make the dark and dreary winter days and nights just a little bit brighter.

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

## Click of the Wrist

## A Long Time Ago

**Merry Christmas? Happy holidays? The real greeting this week should be "May the Force be with you." Or maybe not. But as the first Star Wars movie in a decade comes to theatres, it's a great time to get your geek on—and celebrate the coming of winter.**

## Not Flaky

If you think you outgrew paper snowflakes years ago, take a look at these artistic creations—and try your hand at designs modeled on characters from *The Force Awakens*.

## A Very Merry Holiday Special

*Star Wars Christmas* (1978), or the Star Wars Holiday Special, as it's commonly called, is legendary for its awfulness. Here the Nostalgia Critic—script in hand—takes on the special, complete with agonizing clips from the film. Watch it if you dare.

## Call in the Troops

For decades the Japanese military has assisted in the Sapporo Snow Festival, creating massive snow sculptures as part of their training. This past winter they spent a month building a giant Star Wars tribute, complete with a frighteningly large and snowy Darth Vader. The folks on Hoth could learn a thing or two!





## Directed Studies

Deanna Roney



It was intimidating at first, seeing those directed studies courses. When I added them to my plan a few years ago I assumed by the time I got to them I would feel more comfortable: I would know what I was doing, and have a clear goal. The first one I took was English 491, it was a great introduction to this form of studying and I was excited to work on a topic that had intrigued me from a previous course. I was able to develop my own topic and do research on it from the perspective I wanted, answering the questions that had plagued me.

Most recently I have been working on WGST 465, another directed studies course. This time I had a background in ENGL 491 so I knew what to expect. At least I knew more of what to expect than I did before. For this course I was able to explore another topic that I touched on in a previous course, one that I had written a paper on, but not to the

depth that I wanted to. Because of the word count limit, I wasn't able to explore it in that course in a way that I felt the topic deserved. So when embarking on this course I knew there would be a significant amount of work and research involved. But in this case, it did not feel like work. The research was all information I wanted to read, I wanted to understand, and I read through paper after paper about the topic.

As I near the end of my degree I am finding my motivation lacking. The feeling of being burnt out follows each draft of each assignment. I was struggling to get through my papers; in WGST 465 there is a short paper assignment due before the final paper. But the short paper was simply a review of the articles, it seemed like an extra hurdle I had to jump before being able to work on the final paper, the paper which has been haunting me since my last paper on the topic. As days passed with little work being accomplished and my frustration building, I decided to take an unorthodox approach to the topic at hand. I decided to put aside the courses and papers that I could not get motivated to write, and work, instead, on the one I had a passion for. I sat at my desk for eight hours and wrote, researched, and edited my paper. I drank my fill of coffee and moved onto tea while the sun rose and set in the sky, the day passed quickly, and I had pages of research, pages of my paper. And, I had my voice.

I rediscovered my passion for learning, for working on papers, I rediscovered what it felt like to be excited about a project, rather than simply trying to get through it. As I wrote my paper, as I saw the words coming alive on the screen, I felt giddy, almost hyper. It was a feeling I had been lacking. Writing something I have a passion for, something I am proud of, has reignited my passion for school in and of itself. Directed studies courses are an incredible opportunity to undertake research under the guiding hand of a supervisor. Having someone to guide your passion, and advise your research, or simply discuss your ideas with, it an opportunity that none should pass up.

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



## A Complicated Holiday

Carla Knipe



This holiday season will be unlike any other I've experienced. You see, my Mom passed away suddenly just after Thanksgiving. The weeks that followed were a whirlwind for me; travelling to my hometown in rural British Columbia, funeral planning, making sure my Dad was doing okay and had some support, and also trying to navigate and support my young son through the experience of losing the only grandma he knew. I pushed my needs down the list, which goes against all the advice out there on handling grief, but "keeping calm and carrying on" has been a coping mechanism. I felt I didn't have much of a choice because moms don't have the luxury of completely falling apart. My only choice, I felt, was to keep my routine of going to work every day, running a household and co-ordinating a busy family schedule because others were relying on me. My university studies, however, became a casualty of the trauma of losing my mother. I've tried many times to sit down to study but, every time, I found I could not. I have often told myself during the past couple of months that, on the whole, I've been doing okay—not out of arrogance, but out of a combined sense of self-reassurance and self-soothing.

Throughout the process of dealing with loss, the writer in me has sought out comforting words to try to articulate these most difficult of feelings, but words fail more often than not. I've looked at web pages—of which there are hundreds—and searched for books at the public library on how to grieve. I've discovered that the topic is written from any perspective imaginable, but right now I feel all of the perspectives come up short and feel so empty because their grief is not mine. But a wise friend said something that really resonated with me. She said that the experience of losing a loved one makes people part of a club, one that everyone gets admitted to at some point, but it is secret because hardly anyone openly talks about belonging to it. This isn't only true about death; the same can be said for any sort of loss, be it health issues, unemployment or painful family relationships.

Of course, now the holiday season comes into play. Normally, I really enjoy the rituals of baking and decorating and writing out cards while accompanied by a soundtrack of holiday tunes. However, I find that, this year, instead of these activities energizing me they are completely draining. This has been the biggest surprise about how things have changed.

The problem with dealing with loss at this time of year is that everything is focussed outward—the light displays, the parties, seeking out all those perfect presents, and the emphasis on being close to loved ones. No one seems

to quite know what to do with the members of the secret club, especially the "new recruits", who have only recently lost someone who was an integral part of their celebrations. Dealing with loss is such an intimate, individual process; so it is easy for those who are grieving to feel isolated instead of connected, especially when everyone else appears so merry. This aspect of the holidays tends to get glossed over in the midst of all the hustle and bustle. The unwritten rule is no one is really allowed to speak of difficult things in case the magic gets ruined for everyone else. Yes, I've read all tips on surviving the holidays, ones that include lighting a candle in memory of the loved one, setting a place at the table for them, and even talking to them out loud as if they were in the room. But right now, all these things just don't feel right. Granted, they might at some point, but right now, nothing seems to fit, and I am not prepared for feeling this way or know how I should best react.

When I paid attention to how drained I was, I realized that my lack of energy was a message my inner self was sending me, telling me what it needed. It was saying that I needed to take some time to reflect and absorb everything that had recently happened. Traditionally, this is what New Year's is for, but once I understood this message, I allowed myself to let go of the external pressure. I knew it wouldn't be fair to my husband and son to cancel our celebrations altogether, but I realized that, this year, I needed a break from the glitter and fancy wrapping that the holidays tend to be packaged in. I needed to downsize the scale and scope of everything. I realized that simplifying would give my soul the chance to do what it needed. As a result, at least for this year's holiday season, I have chosen not to spend time in chaotic shopping malls, and I've let go of the need to purchase a gift for everyone. My shortbread will be store-bought this year, instead of homemade, and my decorations will be kept to a minimum. I have given myself permission to just sit quietly with a cup of tea and a film on Netflix if I feel if that is what I need at that moment. Permission to not go out to social events where I don't feel comfortable—and that choice is truly okay.

I hope that others feel the courage to do the same sort of holiday downsizing, even if they aren't going through the pain of grief right now. I think taking a step back from time to time and celebrating what is truly important in a simple way is healthy. And I say a special message to **you**, the fellow members of the secret club, the ones who have also recently lost a loved one, I truly hope you can summon the strength you need to get through this difficult time. My wish for you, whose feelings of grief and loss are so raw and new and foreign, is to not feel the need to bow to the pressures of the "must do" and "ought to" lists, but to do what only you feel you truly want to do, not what you feel obligated to do. My wish for *anyone* who is going through any sort of a difficult time right now is that they can give themselves the gift of treating themselves gently and, perhaps most importantly, to allow themselves to feel whatever emotions bubble up to the surface—even if those feelings turn out to be complicated and bewildering—and especially if they go against the grain of what society dictates that people *should* feel this time of year.

For many, this holiday season will not be completely joyful. But I hope in the midst of the pain, they can still feel loved and, despite the difficult emotions of loss, they can find a measure of peace.

*Carla is an AU student majoring in English. She welcomes comments and discussion on her Twitter feed, @LunchBuster.*



## Now or Never

Are you living in the future tense? You know, living for when all is perfect: the house is big enough and beautifully decorated; all the work is done; the calendar is clear; the bank account is bulging. I know I have. The excuses and rationalization for not fully living here and now have changed at various times in my life. Being in the throes of raising a family provides years' worth of get out of jail free cards. Being a working stiff eats up huge chunks of time so who can blame a girl or guy for coasting through. Getting older offers a whole other set of reasons like less energy and an unwilling body.

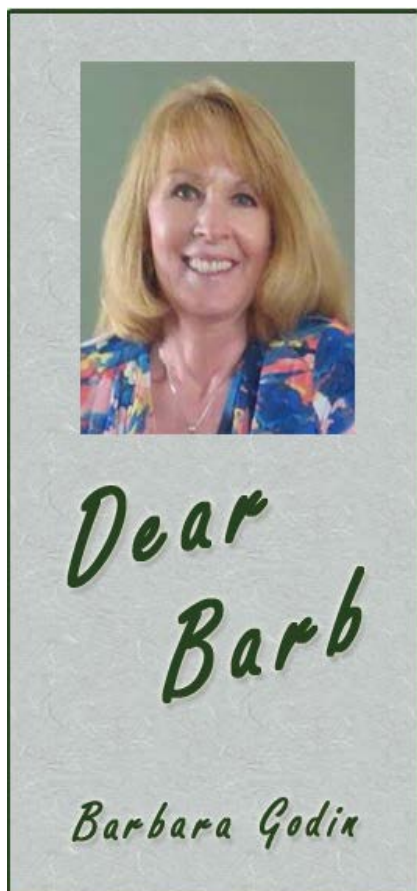
Now I'm trying my best to bring it all home to this moment. 'It' being attention and intention. For me it has meant taking a close look at individual possessions. Do I need a dozen mugs from businesses or dinner sets? Or do I opt for a gorgeous bone china mug emblazoned with luscious red poppies? Or perhaps my leopard print one. Do I keep the high thread count sheets (that pilled nonetheless) or throw them out loooong before their life should have been up? How many more years should I save my Wedgewood dinner set for the perfect meal? It's only been forty-two years so far.

Burning the 'special' candles, dabbing the 'expensive' perfume, making the first mark in a pristine journal are signs to the universe that we've gotten the life lesson about scarcity versus abundance. If we use something it will be replaced because there's always more where that came from. If we hoard it, there isn't room (or need) for more or better. Gradually I'm letting go of those things I no longer love or use. They've served their purpose.

Our house is small. And not likely to get bigger anytime soon. There are some niggling projects that need doing: replacing some interior doors, painting the exterior doors and trim, and repainting the bathroom vanity. Despite that we've invited a couple for dinner next Sunday. I've decorated the tree not with every decoration I own but with my current favourites. I will pull out the china set and other precious serving dishes. Maybe I'll find my silver flatware set circa 1973 and use that too. The Saje nebulizer will be on with some wonderful scent filling the air. Dare I use a fancy schmancy tablecloth? What if someone spills something? Oh well.

Are we brave enough to look into our lives and see what we're saving for the perfect day? Activities we won't begin because we're not ready? Dreams we won't pursue because we've got to \_\_\_\_\_ first. Each time I donate or sell the superfluous in my life there's more room for me and the things I wish to do or use. Eventually we all realize that taking the world by storm may not happen. Imperfect things actually done today are better than perfect things never executed. It's now or never, from where I sit.

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



## The Difference a Wedding Makes

**Dear Barb:**

*My husband and I have been married two years. Before we got married my mother-in-law was great. She and I did things together and had lots of laughs, but things have changed. Now when she comes over she is constantly trying to tell me how things should be done. For example, the other day I was preparing stew while she was visiting, I was chopping up the potatoes and she stopped me and said, "This is how Greg likes them done." She also tells me how to clean the house, do the laundry, even how to make our bed. She keeps saying, "She knows how Greg likes things to be done." When I talk to my husband about this he says "Oh that's the way she is, just ignore it," but I can't ignore it. I really don't want to have problems with my mother-in-law; because I know when I have kids things will just get worse. I don't know how to resolve this! Do you have any advice for me? Thanks, Kristen.*

Hey Kristen:

You have a very common problem. Many mothers feel somewhat threatened by their daughter-in-laws as they have always been the most important woman in their son's life and now someone has taken their place. Try to be patient with her, while also drawing your boundaries. When you are preparing the stew and she intercepted, you could have said, "I appreciate what you are saying, but this is how I prepare my stew." Also your husband needs to support you, because if his mother sees that her son is happy she will be more accepting of the way you do things. It may take a while for you both to get your mother-in-law to accept the situation, but, eventually, she will have to if she wants to have a healthy and

happy relationship with her son and his wife. Thanks for your question Kristen.

**Dear Barb:**

*I have been dating a really great guy and we are planning on marrying next year. But with our wedding preparations Brad has become controlling and unreasonable. He doesn't want to spend any money, he thinks we should buy cheap wedding accessories, and hand deliver our invitations. Also, he wants to serve pizza for dinner. I absolutely refuse to have pizza for my wedding dinner! This has become such an issue that I am getting to the point where I would rather call off the wedding and just elope. I'm wondering if this is a prelude of things to come and he is going to be this cheap and controlling once we are married. I know I can't live like that. I really do love him, but I'm not sure how to resolve this issue. Thanks Stacie.*

Hi Stacie:

Congratulations on your upcoming wedding. Actually it is good that this has surfaced before you were married, therefore you have an opportunity to address it and begin your marriage on the right foot. The best way to resolve these types of issues is to go to premarital counselling. You can go to couples counseling with a private counselor or many Churches offer premarital courses for couples. The premarital courses cover many topics such as finances, family planning, as well as faith and prayer. These courses can be in the form of a weekend retreat, or weekly classes. Good Luck and thanks for your question, Stacie.

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



# FUNNY LIT LINES

To lose one parent may be regarded as a misfortune; to lose both looks like carelessness.



BY OSCAR WILDE, IN *THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING ERNEST*

BY WANDA WATERMAN





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## AUSU 2016 Weekly Calendars are Here!

AUSU's new **weekly pocket calendars** for 2016 have arrived and are ready to be shipped out **FREE** to our members!

The new calendars are a simpler, more compact weekly planning tool than we offered in previous years, perfect for throwing in your bag or purse to help you plan your studies on the go. The calendars feature:

- Weekly planning
- 2017 advance planning
- Contacts
- Birthdays & Anniversaries
- Keyboard shortcuts tips
- Texting acronyms
- Maps & time zones
- Time zones
- ..and even little notebook!

To order a planner, email [admin@ausu.org](mailto:admin@ausu.org) with your name, AU student ID number, and mailing address.



## IMPORTANT DATES

- **Dec 13:** January degree requirements deadline
- **Dec 16:** [Edmonton Meet & Greet](#)
- **Dec 25-Jan 3:** AU & AUSU Holiday Closure
- **Dec 24:** Deadline to request exams with no late fee
- **Dec 30:** January course extension deadline
- **Jan 10:** Deadline to register in a course starting Feb 1
- **Jan 15:** Deadline for exams for Dec 31 course end dates

## Come meet AUSU Council in Edmonton!

On December 16, meet up with AUSU President, Shawna Wasylyshyn and other AU students in Edmonton, AB!

**DATE:** Wednesday, December 16

**TIME:** 1:00pm MST

**PLACE:** Good Earth Coffee, 9942 108 Street, Edmonton



## Free Lynda.com Membership

AUSU provides all our members with a **FREE** subscription to lynda.com, the world's premier video training website with over 1,400 videos and more added weekly.

Numerous new courses added just this week include:

- iOS 9: iPhone and iPad Essential Training
- Excel Tips
- Before and After: Graphic Design Best Practices
- Photos for OS X Essential Training
- ...many more

Check it out this free service on our website [here](#).



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# CLASSIFIEDS

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

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

## THE VOICE

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