

# THE VOICE

## MAGAZINE

Vol 23 Issue 49 2015-12-18

### Minds we Meet

A Picture's Worth 1000 words.

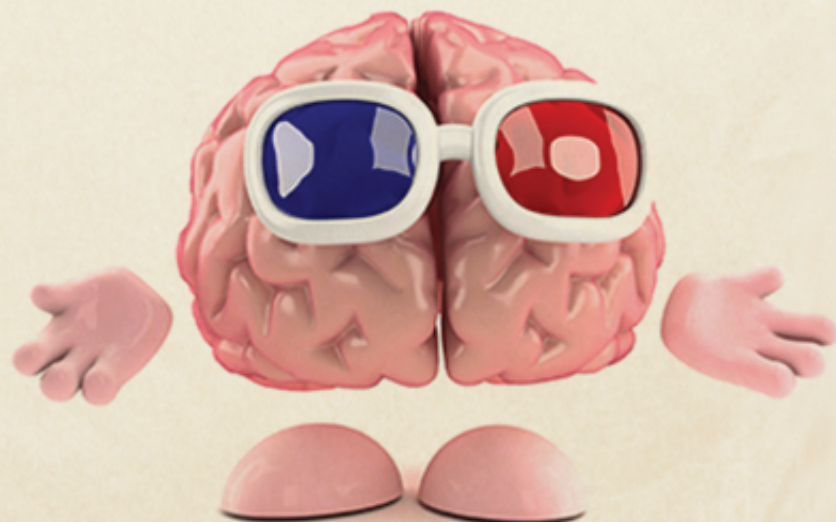
### Zac's Story

A Story with Heart for the Holidays.

### Replenish

Movies for Motivation?

*Plus:  
Council Connection  
Home for the Holidays  
and much more!*



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***The Voice  
Magazine***

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every Friday in HTML and  
PDF format.

For weekly email  
reminders as each issue is  
posted, fill out the  
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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****Happy Holidays!****Karl Low**

Just before we get going here, I have to point out and apologize for an error that was made in the last issue. We said (or more particularly, I did, as I write the opening blurb for the Meeting the Minds column) that Dr. Diehl-Jones is with AU's Faculty of Health Sciences. This was a mistake. AU doesn't have a Faculty of Health Sciences, we instead have a Faculty of Health Disciplines. It might seem like a minor thing, but when I asked Dr. Margaret Edwards, the Dean of the Faculty, about the difference, she pointed out that the term Health Disciplines better reflects the practiced-based nature of the faculty's programs as opposed to a pure science approach.

So now you know.

With that done, welcome to the final issue of *The Voice Magazine* for 2015! Christmas and New Years is a holiday for us as it is for the rest of AU, which means the next issue, the "Best Of the Voice" issue will be showing up on January 8th. However, there's still time to get in your votes for what story or stories you think really show-case why it is you read *The Voice Magazine*. Just mail your choices to [voice@voicemagazine.org](mailto:voice@voicemagazine.org) and look to see what comes out on January 8th. Of course, if you don't quite remember what article it

was, just mail in with a general description of it, and we'll figure it out from there.

This issue, however, we start off with a Minds We Meet interview with Kaitland Goulet, a student working as a legal assistant who is looking to one day save the world—or at least the humanity of it. She sent in what is possibly the best picture we've received for the column. So much so that I decided I had to save it for this issue, just so that it would be up for several weeks. Thanks, Kaitland!

We also have a number of appropriately themed articles for the season, including a heart-pumping (pun intended) tale from Barb Godin, who writes about her Grandson Zac. It's a story that we can all draw some inspiration from this time of year.

And we also have a new Council Connection. This one has some interesting news for students, specifically about AUSU's subscription to Lynda.com and the possibility of AU providing a service to students that has been years in coming, one that students from most other universities simply take for granted.

Our cover picture this week is tied to Deanna Roney's article, "Replenish", as she, like many students, finds her motivation flagging as she nears the end of her degree, and comes across a way to bring that motivation back up.

So, with that, I hope you all have a wonderful holiday season, manage to catch up on all the work you've been procrastinating on, and I'll see you with our Best Of issue on January 8th.

Until then, enjoy the read!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Karl', with a stylized, flowing script.

# MINDS WE MEET



*Kaitland Goulet is an AU student from Edmonton, Alberta who works full-time as a legal assistant. She is in the Bachelor of Professional Arts program at AU, majoring in Communication Studies.*

*Kaitland was recently interviewed by The Voice Magazine. Here's what she had to say about school, social life, and traveling.*

**First of all, whereabouts do you live? And have you always lived there?**

I live in Edmonton. I'm originally from Brooks, which is south of Calgary. My family moved to Edmonton when I was 16 years old.

**Describe the path that led you to AU.**

I have always wanted to go to law school but have taken the path less traveled to get there. When I finally decided to go to law school 3 years ago, I had recently graduated the Legal Assistant Diploma from Grant MacEwan. I had heard that my diploma credits would transfer into the BPA program at Athabasca. Once I confirmed this, I decided to apply for Athabasca! The BPA degree will save me two years' worth of undergrad courses but still meets the requirements to get into law school.

**What do you do like to do when you're not studying?**

I'm a really big travel nut. I get away a couple times each year but I would like to travel more. I run a travel blog called [The Wandering Canucks](#), so in between trips I'm tinkering away at that.

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

Probably my Dad. He always had a wide range of interests, really outside the normal range. I had to learn about a lot of things just to keep up with him.

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

Amal Clooney. Besides the fact that she's married to George Clooney, which is awesome in its own right, she seems like she would be a very interesting person to sit down with. She is a successful lawyer who works predominantly in international human rights law, such as the recent Mohammed Fahmy case in Egypt, which is an area of law I'd ultimately love to work in.

**Describe your experience with online learning. What do you like? Dislike?**

What I like is the convenience. AU makes it so much easier to get where I want to go. There's so much flexibility: if something is going on at work or in my personal life, I can work around it. What I don't like is that it's difficult to communicate with my peers. If I want to discuss something from a course, instead of bouncing it off other students, I have to go directly to my prof. That provides me with only one point of view.

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

About once a semester! I'm taking a full course load as well as working full time. I take 3 or 4 courses every 4 months, which has proven to be a bit stressful. When I approach the halfway point of my semester, I usually have a bit of a meltdown once the assignments start to truly pile up. But once I get a grade back on one of these papers, I find I'm motivated to power through that nasty period and get over it.

**What was your most memorable AU course?**

There have been a few memorable ones. Two in particular, CMNS 321, *Computing in Everyday Life*, and CMNS 421, *Being Online*, I found interesting. Both covered online behaviours and the psychological and sociological aspects of computing and being online.

**If you won \$20 million in a lottery, what would you do with it?**

For starters I would pay off my student loans. Then I'd start a savings account to pay for law school. I'd also pay off my parents' mortgage, and I'd pay for my boyfriend's university tuition—he's at AU, too. And then I'd do some traveling!

**What have you given up to go to AU that you regret the most? Was it worth it?**

Mainly my social life. I don't see my friends as much as I'd like too. This past year has been particularly difficult as two of my close friends have hit some major milestones, like getting married and having their first baby. I've been around for all the excitement, but not nearly as involved as I would have liked to have been. It has been worth it, thanks to their support, but I probably wouldn't put myself in this situation again down the road.

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

I think it would be to work on the problem with tutors. Over the past two years of my undergrad, I've noticed a definite shift in tutor quality. Tutors seem to be overloaded with courses and students and can take quite some time in either grading assignments or responding to e-mails. The good tutors will always do their best, but there does seem to be a change in their ability to be there for students. The quality of tutor service is something that can make or break a student's decision to take another course at AU or even to pursue a degree and I feel this will ultimately affect the school in the long term.

**What's your favourite sound?.**

Music. I'm a pretty big music junkie. I like all kinds of music, especially alternative rock.

**What is your most prized possession?**

That's a challenging question! I would say it's probably my passport.

**Please tell us something that few people know about you.**

I am a pretty big computer nerd. I enjoy courses on computer and internet design. There's such a complexity that is beyond the grasp of many users that I really enjoy.

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

You can only do so much to make everyone else around you happy; focus on your own happiness first. Those who are meant to be in your life will support you regardless of what you do.

**What do you think about e-texts?**

I'm torn on this. I've only had one course with e-texts, the rest have been paper books or PDFs. E-texts are convenient—with my iPad, I can read them wherever I am. However, reading off a screen I find really hard on the eyes. And it's hard to flag e-texts for later reference.

**How do you find communications with your course tutors?**

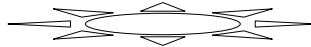
Most have been really awesome and some have gone above and beyond what I expected. One noticed a post of mine on the course discussion forum regarding an assignment, and phoned me the next day to see if I needed help and talked me through the assignment itself.

**Where has life taken you so far?**

A little bit of all over. I've been to England several times, and also to France and Italy. My boyfriend and I have roadtripped down the west coast of the United States to California and back, twice. I've also been to Vegas, Hawaii, and on a cruise from Miami to the Bahamas.

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

I'm reading *A Clash of Kings*, the second book in the *Game of Thrones* series by George Martin.



## The Mindful Bard

### The Tribe

**Wanda Waterman**

**Film:** *The Tribe*

**Director:** Myroslav Slaboshpytskiy

### A Silent Parallel World That's Just as Cruel as This One

"The fury of a demon instantly possessed me. I knew myself no longer. My original soul seemed, at once, to take its flight from my body; and a more than fiendish malevolence, gin-nurtured, thrilled every fibre of my frame."

- Edgar Allan Poe, *The Black Cat*

Even though *The Tribe* is full of sound and dialogue, there's no speech, no music, and no subtitles. All communication is done in Ukrainian Sign Language, which not even the world's American Sign Language users will be able to comprehend. Nonetheless, the film is highly comprehensible in spite of its groundbreaking experiments in casting and cinematography.

Mindful bards should watch this film just for the experience. You



hear the sounds of the environment, which enhances the realism, but you also sometimes wonder if the sounds you're hearing in your own environment are part of this story, adding to the sense of imbalance that the plot quickly sets up.

The stationery camera technique makes you feel as if you're in your own body and watching the action from a distance (in one scene where two girls are getting their passports done we're watching the action from just outside the windows of the two offices, privy only to the sounds of the street), and the sense of personal vulnerability this creates helps you empathise with the characters.

Slaboshpytskiy has flouted the current trend of handheld digital cameras by filming this in 36 mm, and in spite of the ugliness of the scenery in itself, the film is filled with beautiful stills, one of which being a night-time tapestry-like view of an ugly cement structure painted in differing hues, lit by lamps and shaded by softwoods, approached by four depraved young men, the building's lights shining through golden foliage.

Every actor here is acting for the first time, but they perform amazingly well. This should really come as no surprise; the deaf must of necessity develop acting skills that experienced trained actors should envy. Persons with deafness naturally imprint themselves on our hearts with the eloquence of their facial expressions, hand gestures, and body language. Close-ups, needed for most actors to get the subtleties of their facial expressions, would be redundant here.

The students in this Kiev school for the deaf are just as arrogant, cliquish, competitive, status-conscious, and abusive within the protected environment as are their hearing peers in the world outside, but out there they'd be excluded, bullied, and marginalised. Here they can live a parallel life wherein they're free to exploit depraved human souls for money. Instead of being victims of those who can hear, they victimise each other and their marks.

The film is rich with symbols and prophetic references to the current crises in the Ukraine. You can practically feel the cold in the wintry landscape. A derelict car, abandoned at a bus stop, speaks of the neglect and apathy that haunt the country. A classroom lesson on whether or not the Ukraine should join the European Union suggests the issue of whether these young people should join the hearing world of the mainstream or find their way on their own. Their choice soon becomes clear.

The tribe in the title is a small crime syndicate in which members steal, mug, and pimp for money. Two girls have been recruited as prostitutes, their services sold to local truckers. The younger boys are engaged to enter trains selling stuffed toys, mugging passengers, and picking pockets between whites. The three gang leaders look like Mafiosi in their black school uniforms, excitedly signing while walking down the hall, shoulders swaying with bravado.

Our hero is Sergey, who has just entered the school. When he's challenged to a brawl and distinguishes himself, he's immediately recruited into the tribe, winning the job of protecting the girls while they visit the truckers.

Trouble comes when he falls in love with one of the girls. He saves up to buy her for a night, but he has a desire to make love, not just have sex. At first she refuses his mouth kiss— that's going too far, and she has principles of a kind. She's even uncomfortable with the face-to-face nature of the missionary position and demands doggy style. But eventually everything changes.

This is love stripped of beauty, romance, tenderness, and artifice, the love of the oppressed and the victims of



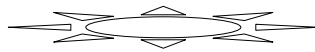
depravity, the kind of love R.L. Burnside sang about—raw, primal, and violent. It's a force that no greed, psychopathy, or oppression can staunch. And in the dark night of the soul, not even the most heartless of criminals is safe.

*The Tribe* manifests six of the Mindful Bard's criteria for films well worth seeing.

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

*Many thanks to Bill Waterman for his indispensable research assistance.*

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



## Home for the Holidays

**Barbara Lehtiniemi**



I used to feel like running away for the holidays. Perhaps go somewhere distant, warm and un-Christmas-y. It wasn't Christmas itself I wanted to run away from but all the work that precedes it.

The Christmas season, despite its many endearing attributes, sometimes feels like a seasonal sprint: a short span of time prompting an intense amount of activity. There are lists to make, shopping to do, cards to send, cookies to bake, rooms to clean, concerts to attend, gifts to wrap, and

family and friends to visit. Just thinking about December's crowded calendar is exhausting!

Some lucky people have a few relaxing days off work to look forward to between Christmas and New Year's Day. I've seldom been one of those fortunate ones. Early in my employment history I worked in retail, and later I worked in finance. Both of those fields require additional hours of work during the busy year-end period, not fewer.

Every year, while I shopped and baked and cleaned and wrapped, I fantasized about running away from Christmas. Instead of spending money on gifts, I reasoned, I would buy a ticket to someplace where there were

no Christmas chores to do and no snow to shovel. Friends and family would be too busy, perhaps, to notice my absence. And if they did, they'd probably wish they had run away, too.

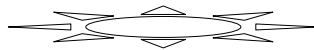
Despite this annual fantasy, I never have run away for Christmas. Instead, I've adjusted my Christmas attitude over the years. I've dropped some of the unnecessary chores (do I really need cookies?), reduced others (absolutely nobody cares how clean my house is—really!), and better managed the rest. Each year, Christmas has come and gone and I've survived it—at home.

I've learned to appreciate other aspects of the holiday season. After moving away from my hometown several years ago, the act of sending cards—and the pleasure of receiving them—became more meaningful. Now Christmas cards keep me connected with people I seldom see. Visiting friends and family also became more important to me as I got older. Loved ones are all getting older too and, having lost a few of them already, I'm keen to appreciate people while they're still around.

So, I've matured, and my Christmas attitude has matured too. Life has taught me what's important. Experience has taught me how to prioritize to make sure what's important gets done. And wisdom has taught me that running away doesn't solve anything.

Each year I hear reports of airport congestion as thousands of Canadians seek to escape Christmas—or at least escape the snow. These days, the thought of having to plan a trip, pack a suitcase, fight my way to and through the airport—an ordeal at the best of times—just for a few days of escape followed by days of catch-up at work and mounds of post-travel laundry at home, well, forget it. I'm exhausted just thinking about it. This year, once again, I'm home for the holidays.

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



## Zac's Story

## Barbara Godin



*The Baptism of Zac and Madison*

Zachary, my grandson, is a unique and special person. I know everyone thinks their grandchildren are special, but Zac (as he likes to be called) truly is, for many reasons.

Zac and his twin sister Madison were the first grandchildren born to both families. Within days of Zac's birth we were confronted with a devastating reality. Zac was born with a congenital heart defect called Truncus Arteriosus, a rare heart problem that means there is only one large blood vessel leading out of the heart instead of the normal two. This usually comes with a hole between the two lower chambers of the heart, causing the oxygen-poor blood

that's heading to the lungs to get mixed with the oxygen-rich blood coming from them and heading to the rest of the body. This causes severe circulatory problems that, if left untreated, can be fatal.

(<http://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/truncus-arteriosus/basics/definition/con-20024974>)

The difference between the two babies was striking. Madison was thriving while Zac struggled; even eating was hard for him. As I held Zac, trying to give him his bottle, his breathing was labored, and I could see his chest contracting under his ribs as he gasped for air. It was so disturbing that I mentioned it to his ICU nurse. We all tried in vain to encourage Zac to take his bottle, but he was just too tired and weak to suck. Ultimately, a feeding tube was inserted. As Zac continued to fade, we were told he needed lifesaving surgery as soon as possible. At thirteen days old Zac was scheduled for open-heart surgery. He would be kept alive by way of a heart-lung machine during the six-hour operation. My daughter and her husband were told he would not live longer than a few months without the surgery. It was a distressing reality as we were torn between happiness when we were with Madison and sadness when we were with Zac.

Zac's ICU nurse suggested we have him baptized prior to the surgery. So mom and dad decided they would have the babies baptized together. Godparents were chosen and a priest was called in. It was heart-breaking to witness these two newborns lying together in the incubator. Two beautiful babies, dressed in nighties and frilly bonnets for their baptism. One expressing a loud, robust voice with arms and legs flailing, while the other lay still, pale and lifeless. Zac was on medication to keep him as still as possible and preserve his strength for the upcoming surgery.

Days later, the families gathered in a small room, waiting for the outcome of the long, painstaking surgery. Madison was with us and provided a much-needed distraction. But there was still an overwhelming sense of relief when we were finally told the surgery was a success. One month later, Zac was back home with his sister. Tears welled in my eyes as Zac lay in the crib beside his sister. His cry was that of a sick baby. He was so thin and weak and his head had been shaved on one side for the IV. It really was a heartbreaking site and I couldn't prevent my tears from falling on his little blanket. The healing process was long and heart-rending, with everyone pitching in to help the parents. In the meantime, we all fell in love with these two little warriors.

Everything seemed to be going well until Zac was six months old. He began to struggle with his breathing again. During his appointment with the cardiologist it was discovered that his pulmonary arteries were not growing, and he was going to have to undergo another procedure. The surgeon assured us this would not be nearly as invasive as the initial procedure: he would go through the groin to insert the two stents needed to open up Zac's pulmonary arteries. We steeled ourselves as best we could for the surgery. I took care of Madison, and the other grandparents travelled with mom and dad to the Toronto Sick Kids Hospital. Within a few days Zac was home and on the mend. He was a little cranky, but still a lovable boy. A baby swing proved to be a lifesaver, providing him distraction from his pain, and a needed break for those caring for him.

Zac got over this hurdle and began to thrive. His engaging personality was undeniable; he was a totally unselfish and loving boy who readily shared with his sister. Through the next few years Zac was closely monitored by a cardiologist, and, eventually, he began school with his sister. There were no obvious signs of the trauma Zac had experienced so far in his brief life, with the exception of the scar on his chest. At five years old he began to play hockey and loved it. One year he even made the competitive team. I had always been doubtful that Zac would be able to play hockey, fortunately, I was wrong. Although a good player, he lacked endurance on the ice. He often returned to the bench, sick to his stomach. But that didn't prevent him from going right back out on the ice. It pulled at my heartstrings to see the little trouper he was as he skated with his friends trying so hard to keep up.

As the years passed he developed into a wonderful boy and teenager. Eventually he would need more surgery, but nobody knew when that would have to happen. Every check-up was filled with anxiety until his parents were able to reassure us that he was fine. But then the day arrived. Zac was almost fifteen and completing his first year of high school when the cardiologist told him that the time had come for his surgery. He bravely asked the cardiologist only one question: afterward, would he finally be able to keep up with the other kids? The cardiologist was tactful in telling Zac that he would feel much better and have more energy, but was careful not to make false promises. The brave front fell when Zac was alone with his mom. Then the tears came. But only briefly. Zac would face this surgery as he faced everything in his life, courageous and strong.

The surgery was to replace the donor valve that had been inserted when he was thirteen days old, plus his stents would be expanded to accommodate his growing body. We had always been told he would have to have open-heart surgery to change the valve, but, with medical advances, they were able to do both procedures through the groin. This would help to speed the recovery, and it was so fast that only a little over a week after surgery he was able to try out for the badminton team—and he made it! I felt my breath catch as I was overcome with pride, but I didn't want to make too much of a fuss.

The surgery had given him increased blood flow that allowed his heart to function more efficiently, providing him with much needed energy and increased endurance. I suggested he try out for hockey again, but by now he was spending most of this free time working at a job he enjoyed and had lost interest in hockey. His sister, Madison, has since picked up the hockey torch and become an awesome goalie.

Zac is now sixteen years old and doing all the typical things teenagers do. He is good looking, popular, well liked, and seems to be able to take most things in stride. A memorable day occurred recently when Zac asked me if he could have twenty dollars to go to the movies with his friends. I had already planned to give him forty dollars, as I had bought his sister some clothes. But when I gave Zac the forty dollars, he handed me back a twenty-dollar bill and said "I don't need this grandma." Anyone who has teenagers will understand how truly remarkable this was. As I looked into his eyes I felt a tug at my own heart, because I knew there was nothing wrong with his, and he was a truly special human being. Zac will probably need more procedures throughout his life, but, with his attitude, I know he's capable of handling those ups and downs. After all, he's a survivor.

## Student Sizzle

## AU's Hot Social Media Topics

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

### AthaU Facebook Group

Carrie is looking for used textbooks for SOCI 321 and IDRL 308. Christofer seeks advice on obtaining invigilators for weeknights and weekends. Barry shares his elation after receiving his final exam grade for GLST 483.

Other posts include AU mail server outage, the Instructional Design Program, and courses FREN 100, GOVN 301, HSRV 489, MATH 215, and PSYC 395.

### Twitter

@AthabascaU tweets: "Education should be accessible at all levels and from anywhere. Enter #onlineEd: <http://goo.gl/iEmgOE> #distEd."

@AthabascaUSU (AUSU) tweets: "Download our Mobile App to plan your studies, access services & connect with other students! <http://bit.ly/1WNxQ7X>."

### Youtube

"George Siemens: Changing Schools, Changing Knowledge" program excerpt posted by The Agenda with Steve Paikin.





## Writer's Toolbox

### No Expert

Christina M. Frey



Whenever a friend or family member has a question about grammar, spelling, usage, or language, they come to me. Sometimes I know the answer. Sometimes I don't.

"Oh, but you're the expert," they say.

"I will be after I look it up," I reply.

Editors are often seen as keepers of a sacred trust—as gurus who have internalized a treasury of language-related knowledge they can dispense at will. But it's not a static profession at all, and if I've learned one thing, it's that taking editing seriously involves a lot more than memorizing a style guide. In fact, in order to develop as a professional, I need to embrace the fact that language changes, technology changes, and culture changes—and that as an editor, keeping up with it all is the greatest privilege my profession affords.

Language trends come and go, like the gradual acceptance of the singular they (as a smoother, simpler alternative to clunky workarounds like he/she)—or the determined chipping away at non-rules advising writers to never, ever split infinitives (ahem). Words appear in the dictionary—words that show where and who we are as a culture and society. Linguists choose words of the year to reflect the direction of language and give us communicators food for thought. New trends in communication emerge, like emojis, and grammar enthusiasts debate whether it's acceptable or even preferable to use nonstandard punctuation in media like text messages.

It's virtually impossible to, as they say, "know all the things," but it's definitely possible to pursue this goal—and it's a whole lot of fun.

If you work with words, make 2016 the year you embrace knowledge. Let it come organically, of course, but seek it out. Read widely—not just in your sub-industry or genre, but outside it, too. Seek out nontraditional venues and guides. Less traditional sources may not be preferred by publishers and news organizations, but they can give you a pulse on popular terms (and advise on the most common spelling of "douchebag").

Join professional and other organizations—or find a local meetup or critique group. Attend conferences whenever you can, thinking of your conference fee as an investment in your career (and if you volunteer a chunk of time, you might get a reduced rate).

Participate in forums to learn what editors and writers are talking about right now. There are Facebook groups, of course (just make sure you join groups that are promo free), but also forums elsewhere—two popular choices are KBoards and Absolute Write.

There are many subgroups out there too, like forums for fantasy authors or indie writers, and narrowing your focus can make what you read more relevant—as well as filter out some of the information overload! But don't ignore trends or discussions relevant to other sub-industries or genres, either. Commit to exploring an area

outside your comfort zone once in a while, and you might discover something highly applicable to your own work.

Shy? It's okay to lurk for now. Grab opportunities to be present for conversations and discussions, even if you're not quite ready to jump in yet. You'll gain confidence and knowledge, and eventually you might surprise yourself by offering to help someone else.

Above all, never feel embarrassed that you don't know everything just yet. You know more than you did—and that's a victory in my book!

Here's to a happy and fulfilling 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](#).*



### **The Fit Student**

**Marie Well**

#### **Combat Anxiety through Nutrition and Emotions**

A good cry could help heal you of anxious feelings. An anger attack on an unsuspecting pillow can alleviate anxiety levels. When anxiety threatens to overwhelm, the expression of emotion is an extraordinary stress-reliever. Similarly, self-esteem and assertiveness both contribute to an overall stress reduction regime. In his book *The Anxiety & Phobia Workbook*, Edmund J. Bourne takes the reader through rounds of strategies on how to stop anxiety in its tracks.

#### **Express Your Feelings**

All too often, anxiety rises when we bottle up our emotions, which can range from anger to sorrow. When these emotions arise, there are plenty of safe and positive ways to express them. By expressing these emotions safely, we can unleash the pent up feelings that hold us hostage to anxiety and phobia.

I consider myself someone who rarely feels anger. I also have learned how to control jealousy so it rarely impacts me. But, I have almost forgotten how to cry as my days bring so much joy that my years of tears are all behind me.

While these may on the surface appear to be positive developments, the lack of expression of such natural emotions may contribute to the anxiety I regularly experience.

Edmund J. Bourne provides a wealth of information on how to express pent up emotions and relieve pent up anxiety and stress: first, try to tap into what emotion you are feeling by labeling it. Notice what form the feeling takes: whether it has shape, size, color, or intensity. While this may seem like an abstract exercise, giving your feeling a physical reality will help you cull it.

Once you notice your feeling and can express what emotion defines it, journal your feelings or express your feelings physically by slamming your fists against a pillow or engaging in vigorous exercise. But never take out anger on a physical person or animal, and don't express anger every day. You don't want anger to become habitual. Only express anger onto physical things every so often.

You could also consult with a therapist or close friend to discuss your emotions of anger or sorrow. But make sure they know that you're not asking for feedback, you just want someone who will listen intently. If you truly need a good cry, try listening to sad music or watch a movie with a sorrowful ending.

After journaling, or after discussing your feelings with a therapist, and you've calmed down, you might be ready to approach the person who your intense feelings are directed toward. Never blame, judge, or put-down the person. Instead, start your sentence with "I'm feeling..." with emphasis on first-person. Speak in a cool, slow-downed manner so that your voice doesn't speed up and the emotion doesn't unleash uncontrollably.

### **Assert Your Views**

Throughout my life, I have had a tendency to resort to passive behaviors. I shied away from literature on assertiveness as much of it taught behavior I considered borderline aggressive—that is, until I encountered material that confirmed my view. In other words, assertiveness could be humble. Assertiveness could be friendly and amiable to all. This perspective of assertiveness sold me on its value.

A long time ago, I learned a model for assertiveness using the acronym DESC, which stood for describe, express, suggest, and consequences. Bourne provides a similar model: (1) be aware of all your basic human rights, including the right to be happy and the right to be treated with respect. (2) Seek out the person you need to address for infringing on your rights, and find a suitable time to meet. (3) Describe the problem in terms of its consequences for you. (4) Say "I feel..." and then fill in the feeling and finish with "when you...". (5) Ask the person to change his or her behavior and (6) relay the consequences for him or her either meeting or denying your request for change.

### **Nurture and Love Your Inner Child**

When I look back on my inner child, I think to myself that I was a shy, sensitive little thing. I whispered when I talked and heaped on the manners. My third and fourth grade teachers made me their pets. I was a people-pleaser.

Yet, when I think back to the positives of my inner child, I have reservations. My childhood lacked much of the luster that some children experience, and I would never want to relive my childhood over again. I'm much happier existing in present-day circumstances.

While this may seem to entail positive developments in my life, my inner child missed out on a lot of the love and nurturing that I'm now able myself to provide her. Right now is my opportunity guide and nurture my own inner child.

You may have an inner child, too, who experienced the negative elements of life, ranging from abuse to neglect to alcoholic parents. Whatever it may be, now resides the opportunity for you to mentally and emotionally go back in time to nurture your inner child.

Bourne provides the means for loving and caring for your inner child. After all, you are never too old to play, laugh, and have fun. First, you need to learn how to overcome "attitudes of criticism, rejection, and/or denial

of your child within" (p. 323). Instead, write a letter of support to your inner child, carry photos of your inner child in your wallet, use visualizations to heal your inner child, or engage in childlike play to re-establish that playful being within you.

Approach your insecurities, fears, weaknesses like you would those of a little child. Show empathy and support to yourself. Coo your inner child into a state of comfort. Buy a teddy bear or rubber ducky. Do special things for your inner child. Take him or her to a movie. Treat your inner child to a special dinner alone. Pamper yourself.



## Extracurricular Makers

**Carla Knipe**



The largest overall trend in hobbies in recent years is the maker movement. The world is full of makers—you yourself might be one—but "maker" is a bit difficult to define. The dictionary definition of a maker is someone who produces or creates something, and the maker movement certainly lives up to this definition, but also goes far beyond it. It is, in essence, an umbrella term that encompasses inventors, craftspeople, hackers, recyclers, and upcyclers, and anyone who can put a good idea into practice.

The movement always existed in one form or another. It lives on through people puttering in basement workshops, craft rooms, garages and garden sheds. Certainly, people have always felt a pull toward leisure activities that contain an element of creativity, whether learning how to restore cars or furniture, becoming self-taught in electronics, designing and sewing their own clothes, or making models out of Meccano sets—or even putting together the ultimate tropical fish aquarium. But one casualty of modern life is that a workshop is now an anomaly in homes rather than the norm. People who live in apartments, or condos with strict rules, often do not have either the space or freedom to indulge in projects. There are also so many activities nowadays that compete for time, leaving creative pursuits far down the list.

But the maker movement proves that the urge to create is not entirely lost. And the pursuits associated with "making" have experienced a revival on an incredible scale, due in part to a reaction against mass production, mass consumerism, and workaholism. However, the irony is that this revival is not because of a backlash against modern technology. In fact, technology has been a large contribution to its success. The accessibility and affordability of personal technology such as 3D printers, home milling machines, and even build-your-own robotics kits has opened up a whole other dimension of creativity to a wider population, rather than just that confined to commercial industry. The Internet also plays a large part in this surge, because creative types across the globe can share ideas and project plans with each other. Crowdfunding websites such as Kickstarter and the online marketplace Etsy provide a marketing platform for these small-scale produced products.



As a result, the maker movement is no longer a fringe movement and there is increased recognition in the value in both the financial sustainability and the personal sense of satisfaction that results from the process of overseeing a product from start to finish. The shift in the movement's legitimacy and entrance into mainstream culture has resulted in the creation of popular Maker Faires, held annually throughout the world, and Make: magazine. Even the "old school" magazine Popular Mechanics is enjoying a new wave of popularity. Being identified as a maker is now viewed with a sense of pride and ownership rather than as a preserve for eccentrics.

The movement is being embraced by the mainstream in another significant way. Community associations and public library systems across North America have converted portions of their facilities to be used as "maker spaces" so that people can gather to share ideas and resources. Often these spaces provide tools for use or loan and may be run as co-operatives. Professionals may lend their expertise on occasion, but mostly they are hubs where the grassroots aspects of the movement rule.

However, there are challenges. Any inventor of a product, especially one that is based on a quirky idea, often faces a huge amount criticism and opposition. For those makers with an entrepreneurial inclination, who wish to take their creations a step further and market them, creating a viable small business also requires a lot of tenacity and business know-how. As well, maker-produced products must compete with mass-produced goods.

Predicting the future of the maker movement is difficult, especially in light of how quickly technology is changing. The safest prediction to make is that it will likely evolve, but, based on the fact that puttering, tinkering and creating has always been around, it is doubtful that it will end up as just another here-today, gone-tomorrow fad. Environmental awareness supports the movement's values of creating new products from old, and salvaging and reusing items. Now, more than ever, people see the need to reassess the dominant consumer culture and the maker movement helps to serve that need.

But in the larger context, academia is also paying attention to the worth of the maker movement. Increasingly, post-secondary institutions recognize that the movement incorporates self-directed learning, learning across disciplines, invention, problem solving—necessary skills for the successful application of knowledge and the aspects of learning that are often neglected in a formal classroom environment. The spirit of making may, in the future, create new dialogues regarding collaboration that provide solutions to many issues facing humanity.

But perhaps the most interesting result of the maker movement is that big business is taking notice. Corporations are slowly realizing that consumers want involvement and input into the products they purchase, which has led to more companies incorporating an element of consumer input into product development and marketing. Several companies, such as tool manufacturers, are offering mentorship and advice to budding inventors. Quite simply, companies are beginning to see that the maker movement is not an anathema to their business model, but can be used as a big asset.

While the formal aspects of the movement may not appeal to everyone, there are lessons that anyone can take from it. First, it encourages people to be active participants in leisure activities. The maker movement encourages people to actually do something. Even if that "something" ends up as a project that didn't quite work out the way it was intended, there is so much intrinsic value in pursuing active hobbies. It also encourages a sense of community; there are lots of available resources to tap into if people seek them out. The key is to take something that you enjoy—or think you might enjoy—and give it a try. That is the easiest way to become a maker.

*Carla's admits that her biggest craft addiction is purchasing fancy paper and washi tape. She vows to eventually find the time to make something from her stash!*

## Music Review

### Heather Ballentine

**Samantha Stevens**



**Artist:** Heather Ballentine  
**Single:** "Christmas Kisses"

Looking for another new song to add to your holiday playlist? Then look no further. Heather Ballentine's latest single is out just in time for Christmas.

Touted as "Music's Favourite Pin Up Girl", Heather Ballentine is an entrepreneur, singer/songwriter, pin-up model, and actress from Arkansas. In 2011 Heather moved to Toronto, where she is building her brand as a pin up model. Grammy award winning producer, Pete Anderson, and co-writer, Lary Bartley, have helped her create "The Cat's Meow." In March of 2015, the first single from that album, "Needle in a Haystack", was released. Encouraged to listen to musicians like Elvis, Patsy Cline, Johnny Cash, The Everly Brothers, Roy Orbison, Wanda Jackson, and Buddy Holly as a child, Heather's music is heavily influenced by these sounds.

But audiences who like big band, swing, country, or even rockabilly will find something to like in the signature sound that she and Pete have created. "Christmas Kisses" is the bonus track from the album "The Cat's Meow."

"Christmas Kisses" is a lively and fun Christmas song. The song showcases Heather's singing perfectly, with minimal instruments distracting from her grand vocals. The song begins with some light jingling bells that stop as soon as Heather's vocals start. The country sound is very evident at times, but even though I am not much of a country fan, I still really enjoyed this song. The influence of Patsy Cline is very evident in "Christmas Kisses," which is great because it means that this song has a sound that isn't heard anymore. There is an easy classic feel to the song that is lacking in a lot of modern music today. With this relaxed feel, I can definitely see this song making it into the realm of holiday classics.

As well, be sure to check out the video as well. Produced by Grammy winner Pete Anderson, with animation done by UK's Greg David, Heather came up with the concept for the video with her co-writer, Lary Bartley. Since the video is for the holiday season, Heather and Lary wanted to create something that the whole family could gather around and enjoy. The video is absolutely adorable and entertaining. From penguins with top hats to a reindeer band, and even Elvis himself, the video is sure to delight all ages.

Although "Christmas Kisses" is great for all of the family, the song is sure to be a crowdpleaser at all of your holiday gathers. As well, I think that this song is great to listen to while wrapping presents, decorating the tree, or writing out those Christmas cards.

"Christmas Kisses" is available on iTunes, and if you are a fan of Heather's single, then be sure to check out the rest of "The Cat's Meow."

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



## Study Tips from a Semi-Anonymous Friend Writing a Dissertation in a Snap, IV

*There is nothing more that The Study Dude wants for you than to write your thesis in a cozy little hub with working Internet.*

*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 returns with part four of *Demystifying Dissertation Writing* by Peg Boyle Single, Ph.D. In today's article, Peg Boyle Single gives you little tricks to enhance your productivity by overcoming writer's block and

doing revisions. She also provides advice on how to make writing a habit.

### Resist Writer's Block

Peg Boyle Single advises on a number of ways to overcome writer's block, including giving and receiving motivation from peer groups.

I don't know how the graduate students of my class collaborated on motivating one another to write their dissertations. I do know that they all gathered like a gang of crime lords, swarming the university pubs and lounges. But when they all bee-lined toward the lounge, I would veer off toward the gym. The time I would have spent gossiping over a brew with the crew, I instead spent weight-lifting, stretching, cycling, and dancing.

While I didn't score popularity points with the group, I did manage to get into peak physical shape. And, as antisocial as I seemed, if the group had engaged in productive, healthy activities, like sports or clubs, I would have joined them without hesitation.

However, among her other steps she includes:

- Don't attempt to do a perfect first draft. Your standards should be set relatively low for the first draft.
- Don't do any edits until your first draft is completed.
- Don't fall into the trap at reading at the expense of writing. Your long outline will reveal where you need to read more and where you should stop reading. (See last week's article for more on the long outline.)
- Don't write your introductions in your first draft. When you want to introduce the thesis or a chapter or a section, opt instead to put a placeholder phrase in the slot. Give some indication of what you want to follow the placeholder. When you complete your first draft, go back and insert your introductory paragraphs.
- When writing first draft, disable spell check.
- Text or phone a writing partner every scheduled writing day to motivate you.
- If you get writer's block, consider free-writing about what you want to accomplish. You can also free-write a sentence or two directly in your thesis, but be sure to delete those free-written comments.

- Access the university writing centre to help you polish your thesis.
- Every forty-five minutes, take a well-deserved break.
- Form a writing group where you each share your work with one another.
- Get a writing coach. They are costly, but worth it. Ensure your writing coach has an editorial background and isn't just a life coach.

### Editing Tips

When I had to edit my thesis, my advisor would edit it for me. I appreciated his relevant edits and the time he spared me, but one incident in particular annoyed me. In this incident, my supervisor told me to place a section of my thesis in another section and rewrite it. I did as he told me. After reviewing my work, my supervisor told me to put the section back to its original position. I did as he told me. Then, he told me to return it to the former position. I did as he told me, only now my frustration grew. I think he had amnesia each time he told me to move the section back to its former position.

When it came time to consider last minute changes before the defence, he told me again to place the section into the original position. Like the headstrong individual I am, I started to cry. That marked the end of the thesis revisions.

Peg Boyle Single has some better ideas for how to approach editing. I'm sure you'll love her strategies as much as I do:

- As your thesis morphs and changes, you will need to do structural edits.
- Make a computer generated table of contents in your document. This will help serve as an outline that readily updates. Have the chapter and section titles appear on your table of contents.
- Get feedback from friends and colleagues about the structure of your table of contents.
- Choose any section (focusing on up to five pages in one stint), print it out, and make revisions to it. Go at your thesis section by section. Mark on your hardy copy outline what section you are working on are have completed.
- After you finish a section, go over the introductory paragraphs. Do they need to be revised to better capture the meaning of the section?
- When drafting your introductory paragraphs, "feel free to use phrases like 'In this section, I present the first, second, and third ideas.' Then, while revising, replace the numbering with alternative ways to suggest order by using terms such as *next*, *following*, *also*, and *in addition*" (p. 171).
- Ensure you have one and only one point in each paragraph. Keep revising and shuffling things around until your paragraph makes only one point.
- Edit out repeated pet phrases.
- Read your work out loud to yourself to get a sense of flow. This will also help you with editing your document.
- In your paragraphs, go from specific comments to more general ones.
- Shorten your paragraphs.

### Make Writing a Habit

When I had to write my thesis, my full-time work got in the way. Plus, my partner delights me to no end, so plenty of time needed to be scheduled for togetherness. This left mainly the weekends for concentrating on the thesis.



To write the thesis, I would go to the nearest internet cafe, buy a tea, and strap myself metaphorically into the seat for a good four- or five-hour session. I did this on both Saturdays and Sundays.

After staring at the computer screen for hours, the font, text, and edits started to jumble. My vision started to blur. Then, when the anxiety settled in, like clockwork, my productivity would nose dive. I would end up fretting over tiny edits, with sweat rolling down my face, hands trembling.

It also didn't help that the computers at the internet cafe often had viruses, even though virus removal was a service offered. Sometimes the Internet wouldn't work properly or the printer would malfunction. At times, I would have to move to four different computers just to find one that worked.

Peg Boyle Single has much better strategies for helping your writing routine:

- Don't just wait until you have a big block of free time to write. Write in any small increment that frees up.
- Writing creates inspired moments. Don't just sit back and hope inspiration dawns on you. You'll hardly ever write if you wait in ambush. Instead, write regularly.
- Write regardless of whether you are in the mood to write or not.
- Ensure you spend quality time with the people you love. They'll fuel you for your writing bouts.
- Do not engage in all-nighters or eight-hour writing sessions. They'll just bog you down and impede your productivity.
- Schedule a stop time for writing.
- If you write daily, you won't have to spend time trying to remember where you left off. By writing every day, your thesis will be fresh on your mind.
- Find a spot in your home, at the library, in a cafe, or elsewhere, where you don't have to tidy up just to begin writing.
- Keep a style guide, thesaurus, and dictionary on hand, and stock up on writing books like Strunk and White.
- Surround yourself with motivational messages.
- Name your file with a name followed by the date in the form of year/month/day in numbers. This will keep your files in the order of most recent to least recent.
- Have a file called "deletes" for material you delete from your thesis. Use a medium blue font so that you can differentiate your deletes file from your regular thesis. That way, you won't mix up the two files.
- Put "\*\*\*\*" at the end of where you stop writing in your thesis. This way, you can readily search for it the next day to continue where you left off. Leave a memo to yourself just under the asterisks, indicating what you want to write when you resume.
- When you don't know how to proceed, type in "Why am I stuck?" and then answer the question. Make sure you delete the text after it's had its usefulness.
- Work on the hardest parts first thing in the morning when your energy is high. Do your writing first and then follow-up with any outstanding reading.

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

#### References

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## In Conversation with Tameca Jones

Wanda Waterman



Tameca Jones is an intense soul singer based in Austin, Texas. She's just released a single, "Hot and Bothered," from her first solo release, an EP due out in 2016. After gaining a strong reputation as a gifted cover artist and stirring performer, Jones's latest work includes her own compositions. Not long ago she collaborated with Gary Clark Jr. on the track "Wings" from his new album, *The Story of Sonny Boy Slim*. Jones recently took the time to talk to us about her creative childhood, her experiences as a composer and performer, and a trick her producer used to draw out her seductive side during a performance.

### Outsider Identities

I'm the youngest child in my family. I was born in Austin, Texas. When I was seven my mother re-married and we moved to Bastrop, Texas.

I hated Bastrop because I didn't fit in. I didn't like rap or R&B back then—I was into Tiffany, Debbie Gibson, and George Michael—so I was teased for not being black enough. I was called "house slave," "Oreo cookie," and a "sell-out" because I didn't talk a certain way or listen to Geto Boys or Bobby Brown.

It was hard for me to find an identity because I was the only black person in all of my honors classes. I didn't know which group to belong to. I found a way to return to Austin, my beloved birth city, and finished out high school there. My quirks and idiosyncrasies were accepted and celebrated there.

### Loving the Limelight

My mother always had me in some kind of creative activity. I was in dance from age two to 14. I loved the limelight from the very beginning. When I debuted my singing skills to my mom at my middle school talent show, she put me in voice and piano lessons. I lasted for three to six months before losing interest. Sure do wish I'd learned how to play piano! I could really use it to write songs faster.

### Austin as Muse

I do feel Austin is creatively stimulating. I can go out any night of the week and discover a new band or hear an old one that inspires me. Music (and condominiums, too, these days) saturate Austin.

### Inspiring Lubricious Performance

My producer printed out pictures of Lenny Kravitz and Chris Hemsworth and taped them to my music stand to inspire a lubricious performance when I recorded vocals for my song "Hot and Bothered." Chris Hemsworth is so damn fine. Lenny Kravitz BEEN fine.

### Working With Gary Clark Jr.

I loved working with Gary. I've been a fan of his for so long. I tried to collaborate with him before he blew up, but we never could find the time. It was a dream come true when he asked me to sing on his album. I think the high point was when Gary called out my name during a taping of *Austin City Limits*. Before he started to play the song I sang on, he asked if I was there and then said, "This is your song, girl," in front of everyone. My jaw dropped. I love Gary to death and hope to work with him again one day if the stars align.

### I Could Fail. I Could Soar ...

I used to play every Thursday night at the Continental Club Gallery. I played there for about five to seven years. That beautiful grind molded who I am today because it was my playground and empire. I could do anything I wanted and play with anyone I chose. I could fail. I could soar. It helped me develop my ear, taste, and voice. Most of all it helped develop my confidence.

### Release Show

The most mesmerizing musical experience I've had would be my single release show at the Parish. I prepped for that show for months. My band, my ex-manager, and I worked our asses off. The hard work paid off because we packed the house. It was an incredible feeling to know that everyone in that room came to see me. They paid money to see my art.

My family was in the audience as well, which made the show super gratifying. My twins watch me toil over songs night after night. They've seen me work hard and grind for years. My babies were finally able to see me in my element and witness what I'd worked so hard to achieve. I could barely hold back the tears. It was a beautiful and emotional evening.

*(to be continued)*

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



## Council Connection

**Karl Low**



On December 10th, the last public Council meeting of the year was held. President Shawna Wasylyshyn and Councillor Pierre Plamondon were both absent with regrets, so VP External & Student Affairs, Colleen Doucette took up the duties of the chair for the evening.

Once the agenda was approved, there were two sets of minutes Council had to approve. Why two? Because AUSU has begun, once again, to hold working meetings (although we were informed that that name wasn't quite the right one, more on that later).

There were two major items of interest to students that came out during this meeting. The first being that AUSU has decided to renew its membership to Lynda.com for three years, meaning that AU undergraduate students will continue to be able to access the variety of courses at Lynda.com.

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The second was that Athabasca University is well on its way to finally rolling out a university email address for students. This is something that students have been asking Athabasca University for for years, as a university email address is often essential to access many of the offers that companies give for post-secondary students.

And while those are the biggest items of note, there was, of course, a lot more that happened during the meeting. If you're interested in the details, read on.

The largest section of the evening was taken up discussing changes to the various elections policies of AUSU. Each motion was carefully worded to ensure that AUSU Council is now adhering to the bylaws and policies governing changes to elections, which means that Council needs to make sure that students have ample time to read and send in comments to Council before the changes become official.

Sometimes, however, the main issues can lead to side issues. In this case, one of the things that was noted and discussed is that AUSU has, in the past, avoided making reference to specific numbered points or policies. The idea being that if those referenced policies changed later, it could make the original point non-sensical if the reference wasn't also changed. You may have seen this in some of your courses, with study guides references specific pages in certain texts—pages that have changed when the new edition came out, but nobody remembered to update the guide.

Executive Director, Sarah Cornett, suggested that this was more an administrative problem than one Council should have to worry about, and Council in general seemed to lean toward preferring to have the specific numbered references in place.

As for the elections policy itself, the changes listed were, overall, mostly tidying changes, with no substantial changes to how the elections are going to be run. However, don't trust me on this, check out the new policy on your own on the AUSU [website](#).

The next issue Council dealt with was how their executive elections are held. The one change made here was some more definition about what happens when a President of AUSU leaves. Over the past year, there's been some disagreement as to whether the VP External, who takes over the office of the President, does so for the remainder of the term, or just until an election for a new President can be held by Council.

Tamra Ross argued the case that there should be, and has been by precedent, a new Executive Election for the President's position if the President leaves. Kim Newsome argued the opposite case, that because Council elects a VP External knowing they could become president, the new President should maintain the position. Other points of discussion were what if the VP External was only interested in the External and Student Affairs role, and did not want the Presidency as a long term role, and what happens in the event that the President has left because the Executive is dysfunctional and Council may wish to change more than just the President out.

A solution was found when it was suggested that the VP External not be allowed to serve out the remainder of the term as President unless Council ratifies that decision before the executive election. Again, if you're interested in the details, you can see the new policy for yourself on the AUSU website.

The third elections related issue was that of by-elections. There were two substantive changes made to this policy, the first was that being required by policy to hold a by-election within 60 days of a general election was probably too close to really allow the by-election to be meaningful. Council expanded that to 90 days.



The second change was a reaction to the situation AUSU went through earlier this year, where it did not have enough Councillors who were able or willing to take on Executive roles, so was unable to call a meeting until they had held a by-election, but did not hold that by-election for a couple months. The new point in policy requires that a by-election be called within 30 days of AUSU Council finding itself with an unfillable vacancy on the Executive.

The next discussion came around AUSU deciding on whether to renew the membership to Lynda.com that allows all current undergrad students to take any courses from the educational site. Three options were presented to Council, a one-year subscription for 1000 users at a cost of \$33,500, a three-year subscription for 1000 users at a cost of 29,400/yr, and a three-year subscription for 2000 users, which would cost 36,900/yr. After some discussion, Council decided that 1000 users was probably sufficient, as those numbers only include current students, so a student who graduates during the year does not need to count against that user-limit. It was noted that Lynda.com does offer the option to increase the number of users in the plan, if need be, for the additional fee. With that, Council approved the option to sign up for another three years of Lynda.com services for 1000 AUSU members at a time, at an amount which fit nicely within the \$30,000 AUSU had budgeted for Lynda.

It was during this discussion, specifically about how AUSU would manage the student numbers for Lynda that the point about Athabasca University soon offering emails was brought up, as VP Finance, Brandon Simmons, mentioned that AU has said that email addresses will happen, and currently hopes to start rolling them out to students in the new year.

That was the last item discussed as policy. Next up came the information items and reports. In there we learned that AU is finalizing the programming that will remove the option for students to sign in to the AUSU Health Plan, formally ending something that I, personally, had a lot of hopes for. We were also told that the service standards survey had received approximately 509 responses and that AUSU had ordered 500 2016 planners to be given out to students, and had already received some 400 orders. The new planners are no longer designed in-house at AUSU, however, so it remains to be seen how students like them.

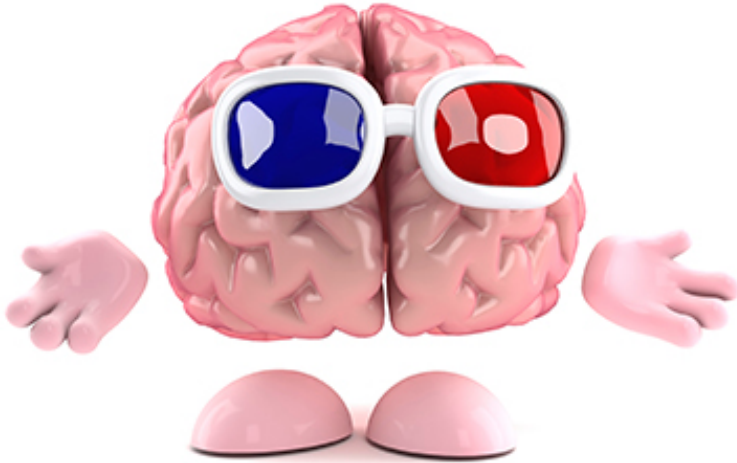
At the end of the meeting, Council held an open session for questions. Student Barb L. asked about the second set of minutes that Council approved. This set of minutes, as it turns out, came from a non-public meeting that Council held at the beginning of December. It was explained that this was less a working meeting than a discussion meeting, and these would be called on an ad-hoc basis as a way for Councillors to brainstorm and work out general goals and policies. They aren't being made public to make it more comfortable for Councillors to put out all kinds of ideas and discuss them. This is not a new development; previous Councils also would have what they called working meetings for essentially the same purpose. What is new is that the new discussion meetings are being minuted and any decisions made are properly voted on and then brought forward to a public meeting for ratification.

It wasn't a short meeting, ending about two and a half hours after it started at 4:30pm, but it certainly wasn't the longest I've been at either.

*Karl graduated from AU's Bachelor of Arts Program (with Great Distinction, he likes to brag) despite leaving most of his course work to the last month of his contract, every time. While not the most intelligent way to go about it, it did prepare him for the task of getting The Voice Magazine out every week.*

## Replenish

## Deanna Roney



A part of distance education is an insane amount of reading, especially as a humanities student. When we are not reading, we are writing about what we read, which often means rereading some of the previous readings. This can get mundane, and I tend to lose focus. My mind will wander and after a few pages I will realize that my mind was elsewhere and I now have no idea what was on those two pages, despite having highlighted certain passages.

I had a course that incorporated small 1-2minute audio slideshows with certain unit chapters, and this was a great way to break up the reading and allow me to refocus. Some courses include movies to help highlight issues at hand, but most do not. But this does not mean that we cannot find our own movies that relate to the subject, drive home some of the points of the course, and bring it to life.

I have started working on WGST 421: *Advocacy from the Margins*. In the beginning there is a lot of reading that is quite interesting. But, as with any readings, my mind can grow weary after trying to cram too much information in all at once. I left my office to refill my coffee in the hopes that the caffeine boost would refocus me, but instead, I was sucked in by a movie my husband was watching, *Lee Daniels' The Butler* (2013), this movie depicted the civil rights movement. A story that related to my current course. I watched as people fought for their rights and were beaten, thrown in jail, and denied basic human rights. I always find it shocking how recent these events were in our history. I find it inspiring about how far people can come in this same relatively short amount of time.

It can be easy to become disheartened when studying our history with human rights. How we suppressed a population for no reason beyond their sex or race. However, when one stops to consider just how far people have come in attaining these rights, it gives me hope. Hope for further change in the future, hope that one day everyone will be seen as equal—without pockets of sexism or racism. When I consider how far things have come from my grandma's generation, to my mom's, and then to mine, I can see a dramatic change in these short years. With the expansion of education and inclusion of studies dedicated to understanding these suppressions, I believe that these advancements will only continue—and accelerate.

Watching *Lee Daniels' The Butler* replenished my desire to learn and understand. It reminded me that I was not just wading through readings, but learning how to effectively communicate to promote change. Sometimes we need to take a step back from our studies to remind ourselves why we are studying this. It is not just for credit towards a degree, there is another motivation there, though sometimes that can get lost. But, sometimes, all it takes to get it back is to approach the subject from another angle.

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



## Christmas Wishes

Will wonders never cease? It's December 14<sup>th</sup> and I'm ready for Christmas. The gifts are bought and wrapped. The tree has been up for a couple of weeks already. Heavens, I even did a bit of baking in the lead up to a dinner we hosted. If you can call making a cranberry orange loaf and cranberry Rice Krispie snowballs baking. With all that preparation we decided to invite a few couples for supper and board games this Friday.

The unseasonably warm weather made it easier to make some additional different plans. Hilary and I attended a Ukrainian Christmas Baking workshop in Edmonton. We learned how to make some distinctly Ukrainian treats: *pampushky*, *khrustyky*, *rohalyky*. Best of all, we took samples home. This outing ticks a few boxes. Keep learning—check. Spend some quality time with my kid—check. Get hands-on with some of our Ukrainian traditions and customs—check.

The next outing happens the evening of December 20<sup>th</sup> at an Edmonton Church. Axios Male Ensemble, under the direction of Boris Derow, will be singing "sacred choral music to prepare for the nativity of Christ." For this event I've invited my mother and aunt to attend. If the logistics work out Hilary and Grady will be there too. I can only imagine how magnificent this performance will be with the unique acoustics of a domed church. These men gave a spine tingling performance in a community hall at the Babas and Borshch Festival Zabava (party) this summer. The musically challenged (like myself) can only soak it up in awe and admiration.

Our Christmas Eve will be spent at Greg and Carrie's for the convenience of the boys. But this year we're turning our backs on the convenient annual treat of Kentucky Fried Chicken. The potluck plan will give us a better meal. And, not incidentally, provides another chance for all to mindfully and deliberately prepare for and participate in the day.

Maybe that is the lesson here. Resisting the impulse to surrender to the forces that numb us. Not getting caught up in the prescribed routine, either the way we've always done it or what others dictate. Being resilient and creative enough

to adapt. Guilt-free. Doing what makes sense in our lives at this moment. Taking a cooking class, attending a concert or church service. Being generous to the food bank and charities of your choice. Fighting the inertia that defaults to watching TV or playing video games when we should be surrounding ourselves with friends and family. Cherishing the now in all its messy inconvenient glorious maddening reality.

To faithful Voice readers I wish you the best Christmas you can imagine and an incredible 2016. I wish for you mindfulness, joy, and blessings galore. And the strength to deal with the not so joyous days part of any real life, from where I sit.

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



Dear  
Barb

Barbara Godin

## The Quite Mom

**Dear Barb:**

*I have had a lot of difficulty with relationships, as I have been married twice and had quite a few failed relationships I just keep picking the wrong people. I feel like my mom blames me for all my failed relationships, she hasn't said that, but when I mention my failed relationships she agrees with me. Now I haven't spoken to my mom for almost a year. My folks divorced when I was six, but I stayed close to mom until I was a teenager. But then things got so bad that after a fight, an actual physical one, my mom sent me to my dad's house. Later she wanted me to come back, but I was so mad that I stayed with my dad. Things have never been the same between us; and as years went by, they got worse. We tried counseling briefly, but it seemed like a waste of time.*

*I stopped speaking to my mother this time because when my marriage ended, I did not want her to speak to my ex and I told her if she did I would be putting some distance between us. She told me I can't control who she speaks to, therefore she would not agree. Why would a mother do something so mean? I don't know if she has spoken to my ex, but I don't want anything to do with her. Some of my friends have been saying things to me like, she is your mother and how will you feel if something happens to her? I feel she made a choice by choosing to speak to my ex. What is your opinion? Thanks Jackie.*

Hi Jackie:

I don't think you are solving anything by not speaking to your mother. Are you still mad at your mother for sending you to live with your dad, perhaps? I think you need to go back to counseling and work through this relationship with your mother, as obviously it is affecting the other relationships in your life. I agree with your mother, you cannot control who another person sees or speaks to. You may not feel comfortable with your mother speaking to your ex, but chances are their relationship would dissipate over time. I don't understand why you feel your mother has done something so *mean*, when you are the one who has actually cut her out of your life. That's a pretty drastic thing to do! Very few people are one hundred percent happy with everything their parents have done, but most don't obliterate their parents from their life. As your friends have said, have you thought about how you would feel if something happened to your mother? My advice to you is to get some counseling, first by yourself and then with your mother. Counseling will help to improve all of your relationships. Good Luck Jackie.

I would like to wish everyone a Merry Christmas and a happy New Year and I hope you are all able to spend time with the ones you love, as life can change in the blink of an eye!

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.



# UPWARD MOMENTS IN LITERATURE

"[Mrs Ramsay] did in her own heart infinitely prefer boobies to clever men who wrote dissertations."

--Virginia Woolf, in *To the Lighthouse*



BY WANDA WATERMAN





**AUSU**  
ATHABASCA UNIVERSITY  
STUDENTS' UNION

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## IMPORTANT DATES

- **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 14:** AUSU Council meeting (4:30pm MST). RSVP to [admin@ausu.org](mailto:admin@ausu.org) to attend.
- **Jan 15:** Deadline for exams for Dec 31 course end dates



## AU and AUSU Holiday Closure



Please note, both AUSU and the University are closed over the holidays from December 25 to January 3, inclusive.

We will open back up for regular business on January 4, 2016.

## Help over the Holidays

The holidays can be a stressful time. Whether you are facing the holidays solo, overwhelmed by your to-do list, or just feeling the pressure of the darker days, AUSU wants you to know **you are not alone**. **Student Lifeline** can help.

Call **Student Lifeline** 24/7 to speak to a confidential consultant, or log in to the website to [chat securely](#) with a consultant online or to access hundreds of resources.

**1-877-567-2255 (tty 1-877-371-9978)**

[www.lifeworks.com](http://www.lifeworks.com)

**Username: AUSU Password: wellness**



## AUSU Calendars Out of Inventory

Thank you to our members for the overwhelming response to our 2016 weekly calendars. Unfortunately, we are now out of inventory!

If you have not already done so, please download our **mobile app** at [athabasca.campusapp.com](http://athabasca.campusapp.com). It can do everything the paper planner can do and more, including planning your studies, accessing services, and connecting with other students. Check it out!

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# CLASSIFIEDS

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

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## THE VOICE

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*The Voice* is published every Friday in HTML and PDF format.

Contact *The Voice* at [voice@voicemagazine.org](mailto:voice@voicemagazine.org).

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