

THE VOICE

MAGAZINE

Vol 24 Issue 02 2016-01-15

Meeting the Minds

Dr. William Diehl-Jones, Part II

Meeting the Minds

Dr. Junye Wang

A Year Full of Goodness

Better than a Resolution

Plus:

Women of Interest

Music Review: D.O.A.

and much more!



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www.voicemagazine.org

500 Energy Square
10109 – 106 ST NW
Edmonton AB
T5J 3L7
800.788.9041 ext. 2905

Email
voice@voicemagazine.org

Publisher

AU Students' Union

Editor-In-Chief

Sarah Cornett

Managing Editor

Karl Low

Regular Contributors

Hazel Anaka
Christina M. Frey
Barb Godin
Barbara Lehtiniemi
S.D. Livingston
Samantha Stevens
Wanda Waterman

Views and articles presented
here are those of the
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Student Council

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR



We love to hear from you! Send your questions and comments to voice@voicemagazine.org, and please indicate if we may publish your letter.

EDITORIAL**Not Out of the Woods****Karl Low**

As distance students, one of the things we *don't* get is a sense of any of the politics that go on at the University. I've been fortunate enough (or perhaps that's indecisive enough) to have attended both distance and bricks & mortar institutions, and I found that even if you aren't involved in the discussions directly, at a bricks and mortar institution, you do tend to gain some awareness of what's going on. It may be through overheard conversations or spotting the occasional flyer on a notice-board, but when there's conflict in the institution, nearly everybody has a sense of it.

At AU, however, we tend not to know exactly how well, or poorly, the institution is operating. So long as we get our courses, get our marks in a reasonable time frame, and can contact someone to help us through the tougher parts of our learning, what's there to be concerned about, right?

Unfortunately, that can leave us unprepared if things really hit the fan. I'm speaking of the [recent blog posting](#) that went up on AlbertaPolitics.ca by David Climenhaga. If you haven't read it already, you might want to take some time to do so now. If only so that the rest of this editorial will make sense. But the short version is, despite the response to the Sustainability Report, Athabasca University isn't out of the woods yet.

(That joke is funnier when you see the picture on the blog.)

Now, I'm not going to comment too much on the contents of the blog post itself, as I haven't yet contacted anybody at the university for their response, but from my initial reading of the letters and policies involved, Mr. Climenhaga may well have a point.

However, my interest is more in the comment section underneath. As of this reading, some 20 comments are there, and the tone toward the university's leadership is not a positive one. If you're a student, this should be a more serious concern to you than the funding issues, because a dysfunctional workplace can lead to sudden staff changes, and when that happens mid-course, it can be extremely disruptive. Another thing to remember is that an article like this can serve to make unhappy staff aware of a way of dealing with the situation they hadn't thought of before. If a number of staff from Athabasca University start writing Alberta's Advanced Education Minister, Lori Sigurdson, about how they're being left out of the presidential search process in spite of her directives to the board, it could prompt her to move forward with the remedies discussed in the article. And while our services would probably continue mostly unaffected, a massive disruption such as that could mean that, when the dust settles, students find a lot of things significantly changed. Maybe for the better, but maybe not. Either way, it's a risk, and maybe one that we should keep in the back of our mind when we're planning out our programs. If there was a couple of months' disruption at the university, how would that affect your plans, and are you prepared for it?

Aside from that, this week, I'm trying out a little something called "Women of Interest". I know that the majority of AU students are women, so when it was suggested that perhaps some coverage of female role-models would be appropriate for AU students, I thought it might be worth a shot. Most of the successful people covered in the media are male (we have two in this very issue) so seeing some of the other side might be worthwhile. Let me know what you think. Oh, and enjoy the read!

MEETING THE MINDS

INTERVIEWS with AU's EDUCATORS



Dr. William Diehl-Jones is an associate professor of nursing with AU's Faculty of Health Disciplines, 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 two-part interview for The Voice Magazine by Marie Well. You can find the first part [here](#).

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

William: Technology and multimedia, if used for its own sake, can needlessly complicate learning by adding an extra barrier between the instructor and the student. One always has to acknowledge that. On the other hand, technology can have several advantages. I think it can improve your teaching by forcing on the instructor a more deliberate and thoughtful approach. You really have to think more about what you are going to communicate and how. The multimedia environment also has some great pluses, in that you can include so many different other types of learning modalities as well as allowing you to bring into

your virtual classroom the wealth of on-line resources.

One educational tool that I like to incorporate within the online environment are screen casts. Basically, with the platform I use, you can see a little picture of me in the upper corner--writing and talking about a given topic; this brings together visual and auditory cues for learning. As a teacher, I think its important to generate new information but I think it is also important to make use of the plethora of existing resources in the on-line world.

Marie: What is your particular philosophy on student evaluation?

William: It has to be immediate. It has to be constructive. It has to help them focus on the learning objectives. You need clear learning objectives, and the evaluation should help the student obtain those objectives.

The evaluation has to also speak to the students' particular strengths. In clinical programs, students come to the table with pre-existing knowledge and skills. It's important to acknowledge that. At the end of the day, however, in a clinical program, there is a set of standards that have to be met, otherwise, you are not safe to practice. The evaluation has to be clear and direct.

Marie: What pedagogical standpoint is most reflective of your way of teaching?

William: I am not sure I have a specific philosophy, but I'll say that the standpoint that I try to adhere to is that you need to give learners the tools they need to learn the material that they want to learn. Two sort of approaches I employ are case-based and problem-based learning.

What we do is we introduce a hypothetical patient. We give them a medical history, a chief complaint, some social history or context, and a medication list, in a 'gradual reveal' format. We present physical exam data, including vital signs, and perhaps a few lab test results. We also ask them what other tests they might order. For example, if a CBC differential is ordered, what might you expect to find?

That sort of approach is challenging to do, but I think it's best for the kind of learners that I teach because these are all clinicians and that's the way they've got to think in practice.

Marie: What technological shifts would you like to see online education take in the future?

William: I would like to see increased bandwidth, and a shift to make it as synchronous as possible. I am working on a virtual auditorium for my new courses. I will be pushing our Adobe Connect to include as many students as possible, in a structured format, trying to enable students to be able to hear and see their instructor online, and enabling them to interact in real time.

Now, the challenge is that we have students all over the country in different time zones. They choose AU because it offers flexibility, so you can't say "You will meet every Wednesday at three for your online class." At AU, we have a very high percentage of students who are working and supporting families. So, you have to offer choice.

Marie: What is your view on social media in the online learning environment?

William: It's a complicated relationship. I don't think it always lives up to the hype. What I mean by that is social media has been touted as being a terrific tool, and many people have indeed successfully used it in the on-line learning environment, but it can be overwhelming for some students. It can also be very biased, and this is a problem when delivering content-heavy courses. With that said, I think we have to adapt and consider how best to incorporate it, given that it is so widely used. It will, however, take a great deal of thought to successfully harness it as an educational tool.

Student Sizzle AU's Hot Social Media Topics

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

AthaU Facebook Group

Sonya has completed 15 out of 90 credits and seeks (and receives) some encouragement to continue. Isabella asks advice on her remaining five courses. Deanna asks for feedback on the MAIS program. Heather wonders how easy it is to get an invigilator outside of Canada.

Other posts include e-texts, AUSU planners, AU accreditation and recognition, the Calgary exam centre, and courses COMP 206, HIST 338, PHIL 367, and PSYC 400.

Twitter

@AthabascaU tweets: "Esi Edugyan is doing her 1st talk as AU Writer in Residence. Learn more on the Giller Winner <http://goo.gl/DiPGr5>."

@AU Business tweets: "A career in Accounting? Sign up for AU and @CPA AB webinars today! Register at: <http://goo.gl/sxBTCw>."

@AthabascaUSU (AUSU) tweets: "AUSU is hiring a Chief Returning Officer! Deadline to apply: Jan 27. <http://bit.ly/1mZoVUE>."

Youtube

AU Faculty of Business posts a video on AU's Manufacturing Management certificate of completion (MMC).



MEETING THE MINDS

INTERVIEWS with AU's EDUCATORS



This week, making up for the holidays, we've got two installments of our Meeting the Minds column. This interview with Dr. Junye Wang was conducted by student Scott Jacobsen. Dr. Wang has come to AU as a research chair from the Campus Alberta Innovates Program

How did you become involved in Athabasca University?

My basic research is on multi-scale and multidisciplinary modelling. The **Campus Alberta Innovates Program (CAIP)** program provides long-term funding so that I can focus on development of an ambitious framework: the modelling framework of integrated terrestrial and aquatic systems. This will lead to a model of integrated watershed management, and recommendations for land- and water-use decisions for Albertans and Canadians.

You are a CAIP Chair, which is different from a Canada

Research Chair. What does this position entail in terms of tasks and responsibilities?

The CAIP Chair in Computational Sustainability and Environmental Analytics provides leadership and vision to establish an interdisciplinary research program in the specified area of environmental sustainability and environmental analytics, promote excellence in research, foster national and international research collaboration and contribute to the reputation of Athabasca University in this area as a leading centre of scholarly excellence to attract high quality students and visiting scholars.

What is your professional area of expertise?

It is hard to say what my expertise is. In practice, I have worked/studied on (chemical, aeronautical, energy, and computing) engineering, environments and agroecosystem for 30 years. Although my research work has been applied to very different problems from chemical and mechanical engineering (e.g., fuel cells and gas turbines) to biogeochemical processes in agroecosystems (e.g., soil physics and nutrient cycling), these modelling work are all essentially based on three types of transports (mass, energy and momentum) and two types of reactions (chemical and biological). Therefore, this may be my professional area.

What is your teaching philosophy?

Because I have worked/studied on different disciplines, I realized that in the world of science and engineering, there were an infinite number of problems to learn, and, of course, it was impossible for anybody to study all of those that were related to his/her fields in one university. Hence, my teaching

philosophy is summarized as a Chinese proverb: "Give a man a fish, and he eats for a day. Teach him how to fish, and he eats for a lifetime."

As a teacher, rather than giving my students the solution to their problems all the time, I would like it to be that my students are capable of analysing and evaluating on their own. Students need to learn the fundamental content of the science and engineering courses. But beyond that I hope to facilitate the acquisition of life-long learning skills, foster critical thinking, and develop problem-solving strategies. Therefore, instead of searching for and solving all kinds of sample problems, they need to focus on the process of problem-solving in their science and engineering courses, and thus gain the ability to solve any problem whenever they need to do so. This will guide them toward becoming independent thinkers and lifetime self-instructors.

How do you promote capacities/skills of research students as a CAIP Chair?

As a CAIP Chair, I have promoted research-driven teaching and learning at AU. A cutting-edge research project is usually something that faces various challenges. Thus, it is an excellent opportunity for students to acquire the skills of critical thinking and problem-solving through real problems-driven learning. Through the cutting-edge research projects, research students can be involved in discussions by asking interesting questions on the project or by facing challenging concepts and, sometimes, paradoxes from the real world. Many cutting-edge research projects require teamwork, which helps students view different problems from different perspectives and disciplines. Thus, students can learn how the theory works and why different expertise and skills from different disciplines are required.

What research are you doing?

The Athabasca river basin (ARB) is ecologically and economically vital for the development and sustainability of northern Alberta communities. Industrial development and climate change are affecting both the ecological sustainability and the well-being of people along the river. While the oilsands offer huge economic opportunities, much remains unknown about the impact of resource development on the environment and society. My research is to establish a modeling framework of integrated biogeochemical and hydrological processes to interpret data and environmental projections. This framework will bridge knowledge gaps of dynamic interactions among nutrients (e.g., carbon and nitrogen), water, pollutants, soil and oil sands, vegetation, and climate.

This can deepen our understanding of the integrated river basin systems including, but not limited to, the land and water, which can determine future trends and relationships from multiple land-use activities in the basin. It can also identify key factors of the cumulative effects of agricultural and unconventional oil and gas production for watershed management. This will provide a new tool for how we might better use land to manage soil, air, and water, and make recommendations for policy and to aid the decision-making of oil companies.

What has your research discovered?

There are also major knowledge gaps in how tailings pollutants will degrade and diffuse through biogeochemical and hydrological processes above and below ground once they are put into a reclamation site. We are expanding the capacity of agroecosystem modelling and computational sustainability for assessing the environmental impacts of agricultural and unconventional oil and gas (oilsands and hydraulic fracturing) production on the agroecosystem. Our initialized results have demonstrated that the framework can identify key factors for watershed management across Athabasca river basin, but more work is needed for a policy support tool.

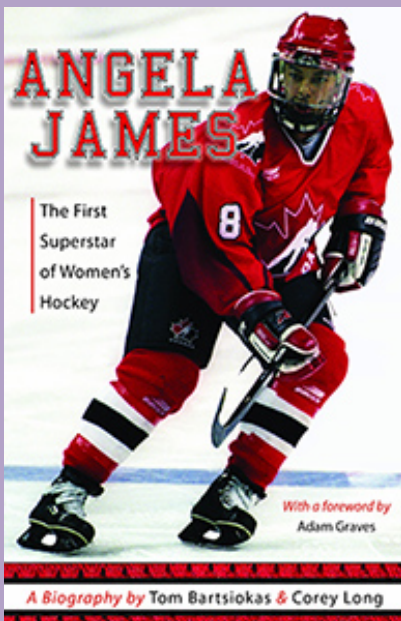
A lot of your research will need interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary efforts. What is the process of incorporating interdisciplinary work in the midst of specialist work like for you?

A river basin is a complex system in which natural processes (e.g., hydrological and biogeochemical) and social processes (e.g., human activities) interact. It is necessary to incorporate interdisciplinary researches if people want to understand such a complex system. In practice, it is not easy to incorporate different disciplines since researchers work usually on their own disciplines. Though we know these experts from different areas should collaborate to address the problems, different areas may use different methods and terminologies. A question is how different specialists could communicate effectively. What interfaces are between disciplines? In spite of clear boundaries between different subject courses, there are no such clear interfaces in the real world problems. My multidisciplinary background may help to communicate among different specialists to find these interfaces that foster efficiency collaboration.

Any advice for students on becoming involved in cutting-edge research?

Students can study and apply fundamental knowledge of the science and engineering in cutting-edge research. Cutting-edge research includes processes of innovation and creation. This is an excellent opportunity to help students acquire the key skills of life-long learning, foster critical thinking, and develop problem-solving through the processes of innovation and creation. They can learn how the theory works and why different expertise and skills are required. Moreover, a cutting-edge research project will promote teamwork and collaboration that helps students view different problems from different perspectives and disciplines. These skills may be more important than single knowledge in future career development and will be of life-long benefit.

Women Of Interest



Angela James: (December 22, 1964) is a Canadian Hockey Legend who became one of the first women inducted into the Hockey Hall of Fame. She was often referred to as the Wayne Gretzky of Women's Hockey.

As a young girl in Toronto, Angela grew up loving hockey, although she had a hard time finding a team that would allow her to play as, at that time, women were scoffed at for attempting it. Angela persisted, and while attending Seneca College excelled in hockey and softball, winning several awards. In 1992 she played for Team Canada in the first women's championship, where they earned a gold medal. She continued to play in four more world championships, during which time she received eight MVP awards. In a contentious decision she was excluded from participating for Canada in the 1998 Winter Olympics. Ultimately, Angela had her jersey (#8) retired.

Angela continued to be honored with several awards and, in 2010, was one of the first of three women welcomed into the Hockey Hall of Fame. This was only made possible as a result of a 2009 amendment to the by-laws allowing women to be accepted.

Angela has received many achievements and is currently a sports coordinator at Seneca College in Toronto, as well as owning the Breakaway Adult Hockey School. Below are a few of the many links available for further reading on Angela James.

- Compiled by Barb

Godin

<https://www.hhof.com/htmlInduct/ind10James.shtml>

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Angela_James_Bowl

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Angela_James

<http://www.whockey.com/school/breakaway>

A Year Full of Goodness

Barbara Lehtiniemi



It doesn't happen often, but every once in a while somebody posts something interesting on Facebook. A month ago, while I scrolled through the ho-hum personal updates, endless cat videos, and anti-whatever rants, I saw something that made me stop scrolling and start thinking.

It was a simple poster that read, "This January, why not start the year with an empty jar and fill it with notes about good things that happen. Then, on New Year's Eve, empty it and see what awesome stuff happened that year." As with many postings on Facebook, I can't

be sure of its origin, but I traced it back to [Savvy: Beauty's](#) page, where it currently shows almost 200,000 shares.

A simple idea with significant value.

I once attended a seminar in which participants were challenged to list five good things that had happened the previous day. It took some hard thinking, but most participants could come up with five good things. I expect if we'd been asked to come up with five good things that had happened a week ago, we'd have had a harder time. A month ago? Forget it!

Small good things are quickly forgotten. Somehow, our memory banks seem to focus instead on the big events. And negative events can loom large in our memory because of the emotional impact. It's easy to forget the everyday triumphs, the passing moments of pleasure, the fleeting delights of the unexpected.

After reading about this jar of good things idea, I tried to remember all the good things that happened to me in 2015. I was surprised that I could remember fewer than twenty. If those represent the only good things that happened in my life last year, that means an average of one good thing every two or three weeks. Unlikely!

How many good things can you remember from last year? Can you list all the times someone did something nice for you? Can you recall all the gifts you received? What about those unexpected freebies or random acts of kindness? How many compliments did you receive, how many challenges did you overcome, how many successes did you have?

Even on days that seem truly awful, chances are that something good happened. But unless something reminds us of the good thing, we soon forget. That's the value in writing the good events down, and preserving them in a jar.

Here's your challenge for 2016: Find a jar (or any other suitable container) and place it somewhere you'll see it every day. Stack small pieces of paper beside it, and a pen. Then each day, try to think of one good thing that

happened. If you start today, you could have 350 slips of paper in your jar by New Year's Eve. Even if you only do it once a week, that's still 50 good things recorded by year's end.

By recording all those good things, the large and the small, you'll get pleasure from them three times (at least.) First, you'll enjoy the good things when they happen. Next you'll enjoy them when you spend a few moments at the end of the day to contemplate which good thing to record and place into the jar. And finally, you'll enjoy them all again when you open the jar on December 31 and read, remember, and relive all the good things that came your way in 2016.

Want to share your good moments? Post them on Twitter with hashtag [#goodthings2016](https://twitter.com/goodthings2016).

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



Study Tips from a Semi-Anonymous Friend

On Writing Well

There is nothing more that The Study Dude wants for you than to chuckle at your own cleverness.

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 examines William Zinsser's iconic book *On Writing Well*. He teaches you how to make your stories person driven, how to make yourself your own best audience,

and the value of making yourself happy when you write.

You've Got Style

Universities typically discourage anyone from using the personal pronouns "I" or "we" in essays. Yet it's the personal pronoun that people often most enjoy seeing when reading your work. Stories beg for real people. Stories that rely on passive verbs with neither actor nor agency don't excite, while stories about real people tend to delight.

When I left the math department for a communications degree, one of my first assignments involved writing an essay in a public speaking course. I eagerly drafted my masterpiece, pleased that I sounded so distant, so objective, so dry. The professor handed it back to me; and in a low tone, he said, "This reads like a technical document. You were in the math department, weren't you?" I read his words as approval. Yet, he never gave me anything above an A-. Even when my writing engaged so much that he requested to read it out loud to the class, he still gave me an A-. I was tagged.

It's important to put the person in writing, says William Zinsser. He advises on how first person writing and other tricks create a sense of style:

- Wherever you can, put the person in your writing, using "I", "we", "us", and "me". If your essay requires you to write in third person, try to at least think in first person terms when writing.
- Write about something interesting in words that you would normally use in a conversation.
- Stay away from using "one" to refer to a person.
- Don't start a sentence with "It is..."
- Try reducing an eight-page article to four. The process of cutting out words and paragraphs will make your writing tighter.
- Use strong action verbs
- Be yourself when writing.

You Are Your Best Audience

My brother has a dry wit. His humour is often cruel, ridiculing, and sometimes tear-jerking. Yet, he finds his own humour hysterical. And other people find him funny, too. He can imitate every character in Bugs Bunny to a tee. He can even move like a robot. He weaves his acting talent into his sarcasm.

Currently, he is writing a book, and he aims to make every page cause him (and others) to burst into laughter. Even though his humour doesn't appeal to me, it appeals to him. It doesn't matter what I think. According to Zinsser, my brother should write the book to make himself happy rather than to aim to appeal to some real or imagined audience.

Perhaps I don't understand dry humour. While reading William Zinsser's book, on one hand, I couldn't see the point in most of his excerpts used to demonstrate humour. Nothing in the entire chapter on humour particularly made me laugh. My partner's humour, on the other hand, has me bursting in fits of giggles all throughout the day. I like playful, innocent humour.

So, should my brother, or William Zinsser, or any of the great humorists try to write for me as an audience, someone who doesn't agree with their senses of humour? Absolutely not. William Zinsser teaches us to write for ourselves without over-thinking our audiences.

- If something strikes you as funny, then write it up. Chances are at least one other person will find it equally funny.
- Make yourself happy before others with your writing.
- Let your personality shine through in your document. It doesn't matter whether the reader likes you or not. The piece is for you first and foremost.
- Don't get too repetitive.

Force Yourself to Write

The best way to hone a writing skill is to get paid for everything you write. And in today's market, with Amazon, *The Voice Magazine*, and Web media, the opportunities to write abound. If you have blogging experience, for example, you can find all kinds of companies eager to hire a blogger. Even if you don't have experience, if you learn how to write a snappy pitch, you can find yourself staring down an invitation to write your first journalistic piece.

Yet, if you want to go professional with writing, you should force yourself to write daily. Produce at least one piece on a daily basis. Write a thousand plus words every time you awake in the morning. Even senseless

journaling can hone a skill. Write anything, but I assure you, you will write more regularly if whatever you produce gets paid.

William Zinsser instructs you on how to write with regularity:

- Write a set number of words daily or weekly. Get into the routine of writing to a quota.
- The best way to learn how to write is through writing. Reading books on how to write only complements the learning process.
- Don't jump point-of-view from first person "I" to the nebulous "one."
- Write enthusiastically. When your enthusiasm starts to wane, the reader will feel it.
- Leave the reader with one new idea. Don't try to force multiple new ideas on the readers as this can confuse the point.

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

Zinsser, William. 2006. *On Writing Well*. New York, NY: Harper Perennial.

Click of the Wrist

You know those crazy runners who are out there racking up miles in sub-freezing temps? They're having a great time—and getting the personal satisfaction of beating the elements. If your New Year's resolutions included fitness, but you just can't stomach the thought of going to the gym, head outdoors to clear your head and strengthen your body. As a recent convert to winter running, I highly recommend it!

Out the Door

Brave the Elements

Part of successful winter running is making sure you're prepared—you want to stay warm, but not so warm that you overheat or sweat too much and risk a chill. *Runner's World* offers some excellent tips for running smart in the cold.

Get a Community

It's easier to stay motivated if you're part of a supportive group or community. Check your local running store for information on scheduled group runs. If you prefer to run solo or with a friend, join a challenge and take part in the community there. Run the Year 2016 challenges participants to run or walk 2016 miles this year—either individually or as part of a team—and the support group on Facebook is fantastic. It's gotten me out the door on more than one frigid morning.

Plan for a Race

Signing up for a winter road or trail race is good motivation to get off the couch. Nothing happening in your area? There are virtual races too, for charity—do a search online to see what strikes your fancy (I'm partial to the [Hogwarts Running Club](#) myself).



The Writer's Toolbox

Judgment Day

Christina M. Frey



New year, new start, new perspective—and fitting that I'd spend time this month using my past knowledge to help shape the future of literature. Fitting, too, that I'd get back just as much as I gave.

The Scholastic Art & Writing Awards are all about recognizing the young people who are the voice of the future, those who will one day take their place at the forefront of the literary world. And that's no overexaggeration—past alumni include the likes of Truman Capote, Sylvia Plath, and Joyce Carol Oates. Kids who get their start through the program receive the push they need to go on to great things.

And I was lucky enough to be a part of all that this past weekend. For the second year in a row I had the privilege of serving as a juror at the regional level, helping select the works that will go on to compete at the national level later this year.

I spent seven hours judging nearly one hundred teen submissions ranging from poetry to flash fiction to science fiction and fantasy short stories. It was one of the most exhausting days I've ever had.

Exhausting, but oh, so rewarding, because not only did I have the opportunity to sit there awed by the depth of perception and meaning and understanding these kids bring to their writing, but I also got schooled myself—giving me the chance to re-evaluate my own perspectives for 2016.

Scholastic's judging rubrics include a strong emphasis on personal voice and on how well the writer manipulates their medium and the words they use to get meaning across. While one of the criteria focuses on technical skill (think grammar and spelling), and a submission rife with errors isn't going to cut it no matter how passionate the writer behind it, it's not the sole deciding factor—even more important to the program is supporting the teens who are learning to develop their own voice as a writer, who are showing signs that one day they'll make an impact in the literary community.

It was interesting taking a break from editing for the purpose of improving a book—whether that's correcting errors or providing developmental feedback—and judging how effectively an author puts themselves into the story (or message or emotional situation) they're creating.

This isn't a side of evaluation I get to take part in very often, or even one that many writers have the opportunity to consider. But it's essential to every writer's development. Because without establishing your voice, without figuring out how to use words to convey the mood you want, without learning how to put your own personal

stamp on what you do, you risk your words becoming just that—words, separated from the person who put them to the page, separated from the reason they're there in the first place.

Correct grammar, spelling, punctuation, and usage is important—it creates clarity, adds subtext or layers of meaning, and ensures that what you have to say is taken seriously. But it's not the whole story. So while I'll definitely continue to provide guidance on those topics here, I'll also pop in from time to time with some deeper stuff, ideas and strategies for developing your voice, manipulating words to create mood and atmosphere, and telling your story the very best way you can.

Get it right—but don't become so wrapped up in the technical aspects that you lose sight of who you are and why you're doing it. Who are you as a writer? What's your unique writing voice? Why do you write, and how does your motivation and your story influence the way you write it? Something to think about as we move forward through 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](#).



In Conversation with Tameca Jones, Part II

Wanda Waterman



Tameca Jones is an intense soul singer based in Austin, Texas. Not long ago she collaborated with Gary Clark Jr. on the track "Wings" from his new album, *The Story of Sonny Boy Slim*.

She's just released a thrilling 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. Jones

recently took the time to talk to us about her songwriting journey, favourite creative fodder, and long term goals. (See the first part of this interview [here](#).)

On Songwriting

I've always written songs. I started out by writing the melodies and lyrics for a band called 8 Million Stories. (I'd answered their ad for a singer/songwriter on Craigslist.) We were together for about three years.

After we broke up I formed a jazz band while trying to write originals solo. It was super hard writing without a band because I didn't play an instrument and had zero musical knowledge. I spent years writing crappy songs in Garageband and learning how chords and melodies worked. It took a lot of sonic turds to yield a few roses. It's still pretty arduous to write a song, but I hope to collaborate with producers and other songwriters who can expedite the process. It sucks to work by myself.

A Powerfully Sensual Voice

Only a few people have commented on the sensuality in my vocals, but it's something I'm hyperaware of. I always strive to get out of my head and ascend to the ether of spirit. In order to connect with the audience, it's essential for me to silence my doubts and fears and access the visceral consciousness.

That's easy for me to do in front of an audience. It happens automatically when I step on stage. It's difficult for me to achieve that in a sterile recording studio where I'm alone, standing in one place hooked up to a machine.

There are singers who *are* machines when they get in the studio, but fall flat live. There are singers who melt faces live, but that fire isn't present when they record. I'd probably put myself in the latter category because I've had a lot of live performance experience but very little recording studio experience. However, I'm about to get a lot of studio experience now that I'm recording my EP.

Feeding the Artistic Self

A book called *The War On Art* by Steven Pressfield deeply influenced me. My friend gave it to me because I was super when I recorded in his studio. Recording is so hard for me because I constantly get in my own way. I judge the notes before they come out of my mouth and my thoughts and lyrics before they leave my head. It's so easy to become creatively constipated. This book taught me to recognize the asshole (doubts) in my head and tell her (them) to "shhhh." It's a must read for every creative being out there.

Artistic Mission Statement:

To deliver sonic honey thunder and stop world ear hunger.

In the Now

Right now I'm writing and recording for my EP, which is set to release in mid-February. I'm gonna call it *Naked* because I'm stepping from behind my covers and showing people my range as an original artist.

On the Horizon

On the horizon for me is SXSW and touring around Texas and beyond. I've built up my name and reputation in Austin; it's time for me to venture outside of my birth city and melt faces around the nation!

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

Music Review

D.O.A.

Samantha Stevens



Band: D.O.A.

Album: *Hard Rain Falling*

I always enjoy bands and musicians who have more to say with their music than the average songs about love and loss, and instead choose to address issues that we all struggle with. Some artists even use music to tackle political problems, like much of the music of the 1960s, and this type of music has come to be known as protest music. However, some bands take protest music a touch too far and use music as their own personal political platform while forgetting the fundamentals of musical composition and the aims of entertaining listeners. D.O.A.'s latest album *Hard Rain Falling*

comes across more like a political agenda. In fact, it is obvious that the band is more interested in shoving their opinions down listeners' throats than making good music. The result is a boring album that comes across as condescending, and the generally feel from their music and attitude is that either you agree with the band's views or you are wrong. Moreover, recognizing that band front man Joe Keithley ran last year "for the BC Green Party in Coquitlam, BC this fall for the office of MLA (Member of the Legislative Assembly)" (<http://www.suddendeath.com>) it is obvious that the band is more focused on being rebels, challenging authority, and forwarding their own political ideals than making good music.

Considered "Canada's legendary Punk Kings" (<http://www.suddendeath.com/music-collection/D/6-doa>), D.O.A. has been going for almost 25 years. Since their founding in 1978, D.O.A. has been travelling the globe performing live and challenging many political and environmental issues through their music. D.O.A. has released many albums over the years, and *Hard Rain Falling* was released in August last year after the band's Kickstarter Campaign to help pay for the production and recording of the album.

The music on *Hard Rain Falling* is punk rock and the sound is loud and intense. The overall sound reminds me of Dropkick Murphys, but D.O.A.'s lyrics and approach are entirely unique.

There is nothing that appealed to me on this album. Although I applaud D.O.A.'s attempt at challenging issues like racism, environmentalism, war, and gangs, the music is harsh and grating. The lyrics are equally unmelodious and jarring, resulting in music that I simply just ignored after a couple of minutes.

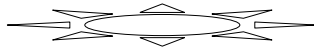
Having taken several psychology courses at Athabasca University, especially PSYC 315 Psychology and the Mass Media, I know all too well how we as mass media users process controversial messages. Some researchers have found that when the public is presented with messages that require action the hardest approaches to work effectively is framing a persuasive message in a negative tone or by appealing to fear (Harris 115). Often times people who listen to a controversial message that requires some part of action on the recipient's part, the message is lost if it is conveyed in a negative tone or if it invokes fear (Harris 115).

I found no entertainment value in D.O.A.'s music, nor was I inspired to take action on the issues that they addressed with their music. Overall, *Hard Rain Falling* is an album that I will not listen to again.

References

Harris, Richard Jackson. *A Cognitive Psychology of Mass Communication*. 5th ed. New York: Routledge, 2009. Print.

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



The Mindful Bard O Lucky Man!

Wanda Waterman

Blasts from the Past

Film: *O Lucky Man!*

Director: Lindsay Anderson

"The problem for us is not are our desires satisfied or not. The problem is how do we know what we desire."

- Slavoj Zizek

"Keep you doped with religion and sex and TV,
And you think you're so clever and classless and free,
But you're still fucking peasants as far as I can see.
A working class hero is something to be."

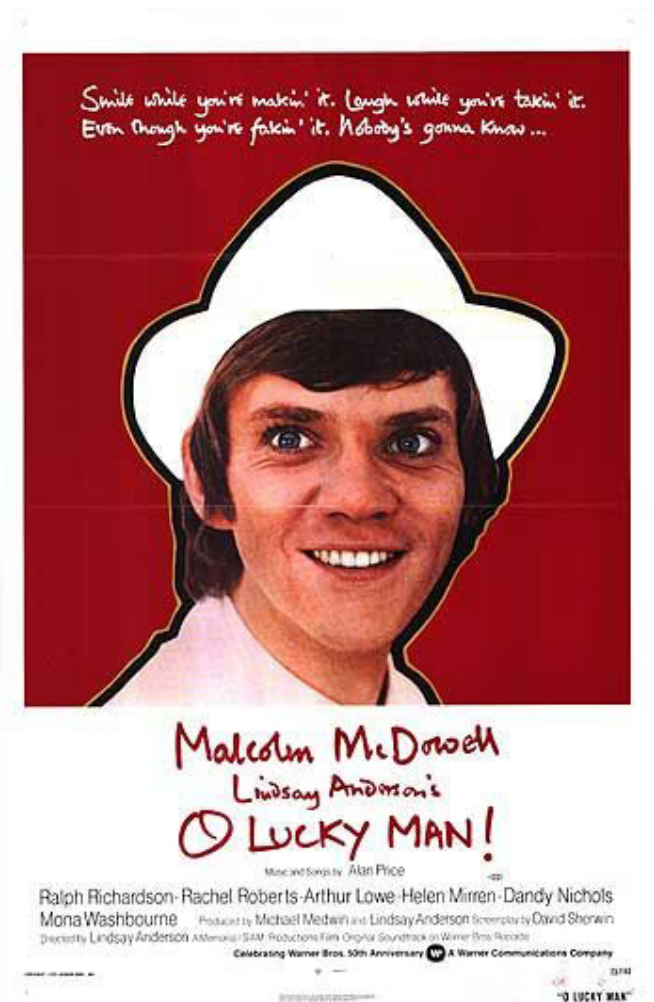
- John Lennon

You've known a Mick Travis, at least, if you've ever worked at a "real" job (i.e. a meaningless, soul-sucking attempt at survival). Mick Travis is that guy who thinks he's in a Horatio Alger, Jr. story—so optimistically ambitious that he's willing to do anything, believing the outcome will be marvelous. A naive, slightly obtuse company man who's so motivated and positive that he must deliberately turn a blind eye to the crimes of his superiors and his own role in perpetrating them.

In *O Lucky Man!* Mick Travis, played superbly by Malcolm McDowell, works for a big coffee company (with the significant title "Imperial Coffee") in Northern England. Because his

boyish good looks have caught the eye of a female CEO, he's chosen for a special mission to drum up sales across the country. On what looks like a typically epic hero's journey Mick encounters corruption, danger, love, and moral dilemmas.

If you haven't already guessed, Travis is symbolic not just of the oppressed proletariat, but of that segment of the proletariat class which has been successfully hoodwinked into thinking it can one day have a piece of the pie. The impoverished third world coffee grower, featured at the start of the film, who gets his hands cut off for stealing a



few beans, doesn't have this luxury.

For their part the industrialists of the wealthy nations don't have the luxury of cutting off workers' hands; they must instead brainwash them into thinking that their government cares and then fill them with the desire for consumer goods that quickly become fetishized into household gods. The whole of Western culture, here presented in allegorical form, conspires to blind the poor working man to the desperation of his plight.

There's one telling scene in which Mick, stumbling along half dead from his latest catastrophe, finds a beautiful autumn country scene with a little white church. It's harvest time, and so the church is surrounded by happy children and piles of root vegetables. He staggers into the empty church, falls upon the laden altar, and begins eating an apple. A woman approaches and admonishes him gently: "Oh no, you can't eat that—that's God's!" but when she sees his sorry state she feels badly for him, kneels down, takes out her breast, and nurses him.

In the next scene Mick, fully revived, is happily waving her good-bye as he skips off to continue his business mission.

You can't miss the message: In capitalism's ubiquitous grasp, even the church is used as a tool for placating misery and keeping the lies alive, sabotaging its rightful role as a challenge to the sins of big business.

In case this is starting to look like Marxist propaganda, there's a line scrawled on a wall—"Revolution is the opium of the intellectuals"—that belies any suggestion that communism might be the answer.

The unique achievement of this film is that the idea is so carefully annunciated while presented in such a delightful fantasy, one that impresses itself on the imagination hard enough to inspire new creativity.

Here's a spoiler alert, but it's so relevant I have to say it. In the next to the last scene Mick finds himself, after a harrowing series of events, auditioning for a film role. The director tells him to smile, but he repeatedly refuses, eventually saying that there's nothing to smile for.

He's finally faced the truth about life, humanity, and moneymaking machinery, and he's not happy about it.

The director then smacks him across the gob with a heavy script and repeats the command: "Smile!"

Mick slowly smiles, the light of understanding flooding his face. It's at this point that he achieves enlightenment.

O Lucky Man! manifests nine 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 stimulates my mind.
- It harmoniously unites art with social action, saving me from both seclusion in an ivory tower and slavery to someone else's political agenda.
- 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 renews my enthusiasm for positive social action.
- It makes me appreciate that life is a complex and rare phenomena, making living a unique opportunity.

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

Shaking Off December

Deanna Roney



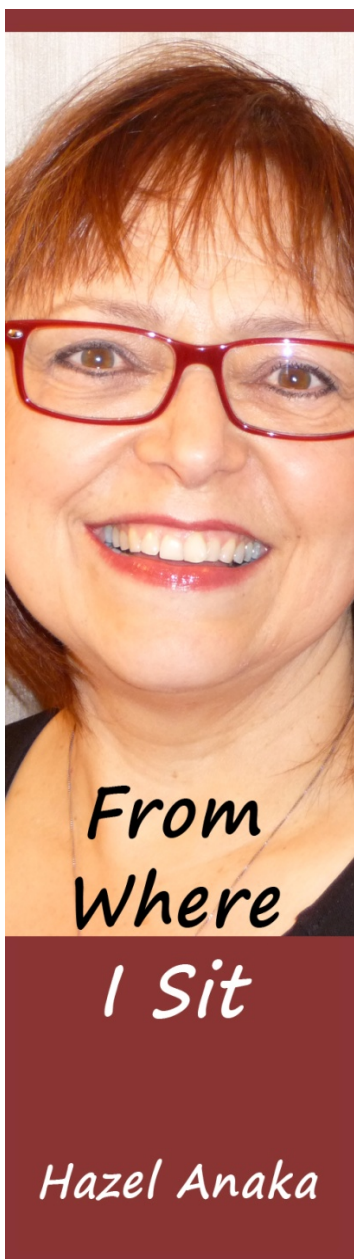
We have rung in another new year and with it comes reality. December gets lost in festivities, visitors, and general hoopla. It is a time when we spend more hours with family and friends and get pulled away from the daily grind. With everyone having more time off we all get pulled away for a much needed rejuvenation. But with the ringing in of the new year, the drop of the ball in time square, comes January—a time to get back to work and reorganize yourself.

How do you make that shift from distracted studies back to full-commitment studies? Everyone has

their own methods; I am sure some are likely more effective than others. Sometimes we have no choice in the matter; our motivation comes from being tossed back in with no choice but that the day has finally come. For me, I have decided to, once again, make myself a schedule. I planned out my month, but I decided, this time, to plan "catch up days." Those days will allow me time to catch up on the days where life interrupted and I did not achieve everything I had planned out. I have also planned days off (unless my catch up day didn't suffice and then these days off turn into catch up days.) I colour coded each course so I can glance at the calendar and see which set of books I need to drag out (or, possibly, put away). I attempted to make this schedule as realistic as possible and yet still challenging. There is a lot of work that must be done in a relatively short amount of time. In my experience creating a schedule that is not realistic, or has no catch up days, can be extremely helpful: for about a week. After that week it all starts to unravel. Instead of being encouraged by the schedule and the end that, through disillusion, seems to be within reach, I find myself discouraged. Looking at my previous schedules, they were full of arrows moving assignments and readings, pushing the course I don't like back and the course I enjoy forward. This method works out okay for the course I like, but it leaves me feeling anxious when I remember the course I didn't want to work on.

Aside from scheduling every day of my life in January I also reorganized my office space. I do not expect it to last long, and, to be honest, it is already beginning to transform into a disarray. Having a fresh, clean, space to start working in makes it more inviting. I love my work space, it is somewhere I can come to be alone, to focus, relax, and feel accomplished. I am easing myself back into this reality-check, and today the only thing on my list to get done is this article. Well, that and perhaps reorganize my office, which seems to have unorganized itself overnight. I think the biggest part of getting back into full time commitment mode is easing yourself back into that chair. Creating a schedule allows me to look at small goals, reachable goals, not needing to see the end before I see the beginning. It will take only a short while to get back into the groove of studying. But while I know the clean office won't (hasn't) last, it is likely that my schedule, such as it is, will not either. However, it will serve its purpose—for at least a while—and get things moving, get me feeling productive, and get me one step closer to that finish line.

(Now, I am off to put a nice big check mark through today!)



More Satisfying

Our satellite package costs a pile of money even though it is not the best one available. There is a great deal of duplication in what is scheduled each day. You can watch the same movie on umpteen different stations at the same time. More useful to the viewer is when the same movie is scheduled for different times. One time is bound to be more convenient than the others.

Overall though, the selection of movies is pretty sad. It seems the mediocre ones (like *Did You Hear About the Morgans?*) or popular box office hits (anything by Adam Sandler—go figure) are *always* on the rotation. Most of these flicks do not warrant a second viewing. Or even a first look sometimes.

That's part of the reason we subscribe to Netflix. To up our viewing options and have more control over what we see when. Even Netflix offers no panacea. It's definitely not the place to find classics, those movies that have withstood the test of time, fads, and fashions.

Historically movies have reflected us back to ourselves. They cover current cultural issues of interest. They provide a pictorial reference point for the era they are depicting. We can tell by the cars being driven, the colour of the shag rug, and the hairstyles exactly when the story was set. Some decorators love Nancy Meyer's movies like *It's Complicated* and *Something's Gotta Give* because of the way she styles her interiors.

When I saw *Breakfast at Tiffany's* was scheduled to run one Sunday I made time to watch it. This 1961 movie starring Audrey Hepburn and George Peppard was a wonderful nostalgic treat. We are reminded why and how Hepburn became a style icon what with her little black dresses, kitten heel pumps, statement jewelry, avant garde profiles, and flamboyant hats. It doesn't surprise me that Truman Capote created the capricious character of Holly Golightly and the dilettante jet set New York scene. Isn't that the way he lived?

Recyclers today claim creative genius when they make a sofa by cutting out the side of a claw foot tub and adding a cushion. Hah. It appeared in this movie, as did the stacked suitcases and minimalism. With smokers having become pariahs it is odd and disconcerting to see everyone with a cigarette in hand throughout the movie. Smoking in bed, restaurants, cabs, anywhere is a culture shock for today's viewer. Watching people use rotary telephones is so quaint. Innocence permeates the whole movie. No nudity, no locked doors, no evil schemers with diabolical plots, or cheap, contrived laughs.

Maybe this need to look back is what led me to watch *Hitchcock* starring Anthony Hopkins and Helen Mirren. It chronicled the making of *Psycho* that premiered in 1960. I've never considered myself a history buff. Perhaps I'm just sick of the current parade of look-alike, sound-alike, same-old, same-old offerings of my TV listings. Looking back has never been more satisfying, 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

Taking Advantage

Dear Barb:

Every year I help my mom host Christmas dinner for our family and every year it turns into a big hassle. I have three brothers and only one has a wife, so the boys don't bring any food. My mom and I make everything, however it's getting tough for my mom. What really bothers me is that my brothers all have children and they don't watch them. The guys all go downstairs and watch football or whatever, while my mom and I are making dinner and watching the kids. My mom is getting older and I know this will fall on my shoulders eventually. I have asked my brothers to contribute to dinner, but that didn't go so well, as only one brother brought some buns. We all love getting together for Christmas, but I don't think my brothers realize how much work this is. I'm not sure how to resolve this. Do you have any suggestions for my family? Thanks Jane.

Hi Jane:

I'm pretty sure the scenario you describe plays out in many households over the Christmas season. My suggestion would be to call a family meeting without your mom, and explain to your brothers that mom is getting older, as often adult children don't want to see their parents as aging. Suggest that if they want to continue having family get-togethers, they are going to have to help out. To make it easier for your brothers, maybe you could order some fruit or veggie trays or side dishes from your local caterer and have your brothers pick them up and pay for them. This is an easy fix that doesn't require a lot of preparation and your

brothers will feel that they are doing their part. As far as the care of the children, you will have to work that out with your brothers. Perhaps bring the children downstairs while you are preparing dinner and tell your brothers that you will let them know when dinner is ready. These are difficult situations, but not impossible to resolve. Thanks for your timely question.

Dear Barb:

My brother recently separated after ten years of marriage. No one in the family really cared for his wife, but we all accepted her and treated her with kindness and respect. One of the problems in their marriage was that she would spend money and run up credit cards and not tell my brother where the money went. Still, he was generous to her at the time of separation, with the support of our family, but he felt bad for his young son. Recently, she contacted him and wants to get back together for the sake of their son. We were all devastated when he agreed to the reconciliation. My mom thinks my brother's ex has spent all her money and now wants to come back. She also thinks my dad should talk to my brother about what he's doing. I don't think my dad should get involved because my brother is a very stubborn person and I don't want there to be problems between him and my dad. What do you think? Thanks Rosie.


Hi Rosie:

I don't think it would be a problem if your father made sure your brother has really thought this decision through, but then let it go, as it is not your father's place to question his decision. Your brother is an adult and these are his choices to make. Sometimes a separation does help a marriage, especially if the individuals have done some counseling, either together or individually.

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

Why Can't We All Be Right? (for Norma Terry)

by Tumblin' Joe



She perched on my porch with her soybean friend
And mused, from her realm of light.
"Why do some have to be wrong?" she asked.
"Why can't we all be right?"

She'd crawled through sewers, wringers, and hells
And come out hearing festive bells.
She'd escaped to the scents of gardens and seas,
And in her hand a jeweled key.



Chuck the semantics and enter the light—
At bottom, we're all of us right!

(TUMBLIN' JOE IS A MEMBER OF THE DRY CORN HUSK POETS' SOCIETY.)

She'd come out with:
"We're all of us right."

So why do we get offended?
Why fight?
Why take a stand?
What's to defend in idea-land?

WRITTEN BY WANDA WATERMAN



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IMPORTANT DATES

- **Jan 15:** Deadline for exams for Dec 31 course end dates
- **Jan 15:** February degree requirements deadline
- **Jan 29:** February course extension deadline
- **Feb 10:** Deadline to register in a course starting Mar 1
- **Feb 10:** Call for Nominations for 2016 General Election
- **Feb 15:** March degree requirements deadline
- **Feb 17:** End of Nomination period

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AUSU ATHABASCA UNIVERSITY STUDENTS' UNION

AUSU is Hiring a CRO

AUSU is now hiring a Chief Returning Officer (CRO) for the upcoming General Election. The deadline to apply is **January 27, 2015**. For information on the job and how to apply, click [here](#).

For more information about the upcoming election, visit our website here. Email resume@ausu.org with any questions.

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THE VOICE

500 Energy Square - 10109 – 106 St NW - Edmonton AB - T5J 3L7
Ph: 855.497.7003 - Fax: 780.497.7003 attn: Voice Editor

Publisher	Athabasca University Students' Union
Editor-In-Chief	Sarah Cornett
Managing Editor	Karl Low

Regular Columnists Hazel Anaka, Barbara Lehtiniemi, S.D. Livingston,
Wanda Waterman, Barb Godin, Christina Frey,
Samantha Stevens

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