

THE VOICE

MAGAZINE

Vol 24 Issue 12 2016-03-25

Meeting the Minds

Dr. Shandip Saha, Part II

A Student Has to Eat

Fighting High Flying Food Costs.

Anita Rau Badami

An Interview with a Canada Reads
Shortlisted Author

Plus:

*Tax Tools for Students
Fly on the Wall
and much more!*



CONTENTS

The Voice's interactive Table of Contents allows you to click a story title to jump to an article. Clicking the bottom right corner of any page returns you here. Some ads and graphics are also links.

Features

Meeting the Minds: *Dr. Sandip Saha, Part II*..... 4

Articles

Editorial: *Hidden Crimes* 3
Tax Tools for Students 6
Anita Rau Badami: *An Interview*..... 7
A Student Has to Eat..... 12
Making a Connection..... 21

Columns

Music Review: *Charlotte Cornfield* 11
The Study Dude: *Is Grandma's Grammar Better?*..... 14
Fly on the Wall: *The Chattering Class*..... 19
From Where I Sit: *Can't Win*..... 22
Dear Barb: *Wedding Mistakes?* 23

News and Events

Student Sizzle..... 10
Click of the Wrist 17
Women of Interest 17
Canadian Education News 18
AUSU Update..... 25

Comic

The Non-Partisan: *Put Me Right*..... 24

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EDITORIAL

Hidden Crimes

Karl Low



It's unfortunate that acting like a human can preclude you from receiving justice. I'm speaking of the Jian Gimeshi trial. If you're unaware, CBC personality Jian Gimeshi was accused of sexually assaulting three women, and choking one. He has been acquitted of all charges. His defense was not that there was no violence or sexual action between them, but rather that it was consensual.

With no physical evidence, the trial essentially comes down to who presents the most believable version of events. In his ruling, the trial judge pointed out serious issues of credibility for the women in doing things such as meeting with Mr. Gimeshi after the incidents, not going to the police immediately, and not telling the full story to police at the time. Given our system's presumption of innocence until beyond a reasonable doubt, the judge found that the women's version of events did not meet a high bar of believability to find Mr. Gimeshi guilty.

I don't know if Mr. Gimeshi is guilty or not. Perhaps they did consent. It isn't disputed that the women went to him willingly, and there are indications that some were warned that he liked things "rough", but then it comes to a question of degree. And

unfortunately, even if he is guilty, the women simply acting like human beings doomed their case. After all, our society is still quite prudish about sex, especially about women who want sex. So admitting to authority figures that you did go to him and were amenable to sex, possibly "rough" sex, but just not to that degree is extremely difficult. That they went to see him afterward does not even strike me as unwarranted. How many women remain in abusive relationships for years hoping that things will improve? Finding a relationship is a very powerful drive, but I'm not sure that hoping a relationship might get better constitutes consent for an act already done. We can be fairly sure, after all, that spouse who get beaten by their partners don't want to be, even though they may stay with the partners. It's simply part of being human.

But I don't know what to do about it either. After all, there almost certainly are people out there who are not above making a false accusation, especially if they feel wronged or if there is a possibility of a significant gain, and we should be careful about assuming for one side or the other. I've got no resolution for this, I'm afraid, but it bothers me. Justice shouldn't be arbitrary, but the world doesn't give a fig for what it should be. It just is.

Anyway, this issue, check out the second part of our interview with Dr. Shandip Saha, and also our interview with Canada Reads contestant, and former Writer-In-Residence, of AU Anita Rau Badami. Plus, Barb L. has some tax tips for students, and Carla Knipe has some tips to keep your food costs down. We also have a thought provoking Fly on the Wall, plus, of course, reviews, entertainment and other articles to keep you busy this long weekend. Enjoy the read!

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

MEETING THE MINDS

INTERVIEWS with AU's EDUCATORS



The following interview features Dr. Shandip Saha, professor of Religious Studies courses in the Center for Humanities at Athabasca University. His research speciality is in the field of Hinduism with an emphasis upon tracing the religious culture of Medieval India (15th to 18th centuries)

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

Dr. Saha: The biggest challenge for me has been transitioning from an environment where one has some direct contact with students to an online environment where your face-to-face contact is far less. It has meant adapting and modifying my

teaching style significantly to meet the demands of online learning. Once you get past that challenge, there's a lot of exciting things that you can do. Athabasca University is in an incredible position where we can reach out to students in a big way, as we have ways to exploit technology and the Internet to its full potential in a way traditional universities cannot, in order to make learning a more vibrant experience for students. That's what makes AU such a leader in online education. We have the people, the faculty, the technology, and other resources necessary to give our students a solid, but nonetheless unique learning experience.

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

Dr. Saha: That's a tough question to answer, but I think that part of it is to make sure the readings that you are using are accessible, engaging, and thought-provoking, so the students can easily digest the material and have something to think about. I also like using visual components in my courses such as lots of images, links to videos, or websites. So, for example, for my World Religions course, I have an optional link that students can click on that will give them a virtual tour of a Taoist temple while another link gives them the opportunity to do a virtual tour through the Dome on the Rock in Jerusalem. In this fashion, students can get a sense of what one of these incredibly sacred sites are all about. On a practical level, study schedules are important to keep students focussed as is lots of communication so students don't feel discouraged as they navigate themselves through course material.

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

Dr. Saha: My courses are very structured and are meant to provide the foundational knowledge necessary for students to carry on with further studies. When I write a course, I try as much as possible to have every unit build upon the one prior one so students are introduced to the great internal diversity that there is to all religious traditions in a logical and systematic way. So, by the time the course is finished, my hope is that the students will have an understanding of the basic concepts, ideas, terms associated with the religion they are studying as well as gain some exposure to some scholarly literature on the topic they are studying.

So, a good course, for me, is well-constructed with the point of being able to stimulate students' minds, to show them diversity of a given religious tradition, and provide them with a basic foundational knowledge of their subject so that they can use it to keep moving on with their studies.

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

Dr. Saha: I can't say I can give an informed answer to that question because I rarely use Facebook and I doubt I have anything intelligent to say that would even warrant a following of one on Twitter. Social media is a great way to attract more students to the student and to get feedback from our students about their academic experiences at AU. I think social media could be useful as a means to help students create some intellectual support and study groups if they are taking the same classes. But, as I said stated, I am not an expert with social media and look at my Facebook page maybe once every two months.

What is your view on interdisciplinary studies?

Dr. Saha: It is absolutely, absolutely, absolutely important. I think a good scholar always knows the best way to bring complexity to his or her scholarship is by drawing from the insights that other disciplines may offer on the subject they are researching. In the case of my own research, it is not enough for me to look at medieval North Indian devotional communities through the lens of textual and literary criticism as some scholars in my field do. I also rely on the work of art historians, urban and economic historians, and social historians in order to piece together the socio-historical context in which these communities thrived and how they reacted to changing social circumstances. For me, studies grounded in a willingness to take the best of what other disciplines have to offer and apply them in a way that can bring out the different shades of complexity to whatever is being studied is what makes for good, solid scholarship.

What was your favourite course to teach? Why this particular course?

Dr. Saha: At AU, I like teaching all of my courses because I find it exciting to introduce people to world religions and hopefully broaden people's perspectives on religion. For example, so much of what the average person knows today about Islam is just coming to thirty second or one-minute news bites and so I am glad that a course like The Islamic Tradition (RELS 206) can help give students of the huge religious diversity there is within Islam. In the case of my course on death and dying in world religions (RELS 211), I am just excited to hear from and read about what my students have to say in a substantial manner about an experience that is universal to the human condition.

If you could confer one piece of wisdom on an upcoming student in your discipline, what would it be?

Dr. Saha: Where I come from, the quest for knowledge is not a game, nor is it something to be abused. It is something, on the contrary, that has to be treated with respect, sensitivity, and seriousness. For myself, solid scholarship is not the product of academic shortcuts and lazy thinking. It is, rather, the product of hard work, discipline, attention to detail, and keeping an open mind. So, my advice to an upcoming student is to read regularly, stay disciplined, and always maintain your academic integrity when writing and publishing. If a student can keep that in his or her mind, they will always be assured that their scholarship will stand above the rest.

Tax Tools for Students

Barbara Lehtiniemi



Easter weekend means a three-day—and for some a four-day—break. This first long weekend of spring means many things to many people. For some, the Easter weekend pivots around religious observances. For many, Easter means a family gathering, a tasty meal, and lots of chocolate. If nothing else, for most Easter at least means a long weekend.

The extra day(s) off work can provide opportunities. A bit of spring cleaning, perhaps, or even yard work if the weather allows. There's ample time for a long weekend getaway, or just to enjoy not feeling

rushed. For some, however, the extra time this weekend means something less enjoyable: taxes.

Tax season is in full swing. The filing deadline of April 30 is looming and the loathsome task of completing your annual tax return must be done. Whether you complete your own return, have a family member do it, or take it to a professional preparer, it's advisable to know as much as you can about the process. Even if you use tax filing software, you are ultimately responsible for the information submitted on your return.

Tax 101. If you're new to the tax return process, start with the basics. Forms and guides for most basic tax situations are available at all Canada Post offices. Additionally, all forms and guides are available online from the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) website. The *General Income and Benefit Guide* takes you through the tax return line by line. CRA has an online tutorial, Learning About Taxes, which includes basic information about income tax and how to file a simple tax return. You can find books at the library, such as *Jacks on Tax*, by Evelyn Jacks, that will explain the process in broader detail. CRA also maintains a list of community volunteers who can provide free help completing your return, if you qualify.

Students are special. Students can find tax information in the CRA publication *P105 Students and Income Tax*. Additionally, CRA has a special webpage devoted to students, at <http://www.cra-arc.gc.ca/students/>. Here you'll find student-specific information such as common income types including scholarships, bursaries, and research grants, and common deductions and credits including tuition, child care expenses, and student loan interest. The CRA student page has a link to information about the Lifelong Learning Plan, under which you can borrow funds from your RRSP to finance your education. And there is a page devoted to information for international students studying in Canada. For students seeking guidance to complete their returns, CRA has a series of videos that cover various aspects of the return from a student perspective.

Software for students.

With tax-filing software, you can print your completed return or upload it directly to CRA's NETFILE service. Tax-filing software is available from many retailers, including electronics stores, office-supply depots and bookstores. Before you buy, check out some of the free tax software available. TurboTax, for example, offers a free tax software download for anyone (excluding Quebec residents) with a simple tax return. And UFile

provides free online filing for students regardless of income. See CRA's [website](#) for a full list of free, NETFILE-compatible software for 2015 taxes.

Like any task, it's important to have the right tools for the job. For taxes, tools include information as well as receipts and forms, calculators and computers. And you'll need lots and lots of time.

Whether you spend this weekend working on taxes or not, you only have five weeks until the filing deadline. Gather your tax tools, learn how to use them, and get started.

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



Anita Rau Badami – An Interview

Scott Jacobsen



Anita Rau Badami was AU's Writer-in-Residence for 2014-2015. She has written several books, received numerous awards, and most recently was featured on CBC's "Canada Reads", a discussion of books that Canadians should read. She was kind enough to allow AU student Scott Jacobsen to interview her for The Voice Magazine.

You were the 2014-15 Writer-in-Residence at AU. In reflection, how was the time at AU?

Anita: My time at AU was wonderful, both as an instructor and as a practising writer. I had the pleasure of working with interesting writers, both beginners and more experienced ones. My relationship was primarily with the written work since this is a distance education programme, and so I could devote a lot of time and thought to each submission. Hopefully this proved useful to the writers concerned. I also finished a draft of my own book in that time.

What major lessons emerged from the interaction with students, faculty, administrators, and the general AU community?

Anita: Working with students always allows me to think about writing anew, to learn even as I am providing instruction. Because of the nature of the position, I did not need to interact much with faculty and administration, but the little contact that I did have gave me a sense of a strong, supportive and caring community of people. I am so glad I had the opportunity to be a part of the AU family.

Your father worked with the Indian Railways and your family moved from one place to another frequently as a result of his job. How did this affect you as a child? What did you learn from the experience?

Anita: As a result of our gypsy existence I learned to adjust to new places and people as a result. I enjoyed change and the excitement of new discoveries -- whether it was people, nature, buildings, or cultures -- in each new location. However, because of these frequent moves, I did not have any long term friendships and either

entertained myself by reading or engaging in creative activities that involved using my imagination such as writing stories or making art—something my parents encouraged me and my siblings to do. I suppose the combination of a restless imagination and a willingness to combine that with words and make something new was what came of the wandering life.

With respect to developing in your early childhood years in India with talent—perhaps even giftedness—in writing, and becoming a professional writer in the present, where did this love of writing come from?

Anita: I loved reading and always imagined writing like my favourite authors. So I guess that's where it all started.

Upon completion of your master's degree, you transformed your graduate-level thesis into *Tamarind Mem* (1996), your first book (Badami, 2016). How did this come to fruition? Or what was the inspiration and timeline for your graduate work being turned into an international publication?

Anita: I wanted to write a story about the labile, shifting nature of memory in a family, and how a mother and her daughter recall their stories and histories differently. I was also thinking about train tracks which go the same direction, are parallel, and yet, the view on either side can be very, very different. The book took me about two years to write. It was accepted for publication a month after I submitted it and another six months or so to edit before it was ready to face the world.

You came to Canada in 1991. As noted in the *January Magazine* interview, you said, "I just followed that husband of mine. He moved to Canada to do a course in environmental science" (Richards, 2000). And that was in Vancouver where you lived with your husband and 13-year old son. So how did the love story begin and develop into the present?

Anita: We were introduced to each other by my great aunt who also happened to be my husband's grade school English teacher, and were married a year later. The love story, as you call it, continues today, 32 years later, our son is 29, and we live in Montreal now.

What perspective does a child give on life for you?

Anita: If you mean, does being a mother give me a new perspective on life, then I'd say certainly. But this is true for practically every change that one undergoes from childhood, through youth, adulthood, and old age. It would take several books to outline all these perspectives, so I think it would suffice to say that I have drawn on all of my experiences to create my fictions.

What differentiates the style of writing in the Indian context compared to the Canadian context?

Anita: I think an author's style is an individual thing rather than something associated with the place in which one lives or has lived.

Your own writing process, seems complex. I've read you start with notebooks and a pen, with about 100 rewrites of the first page of the book. Then you take the best page from those rewrites to the computer, where you complete the work with the notebook as a backup – for if you get stuck (Richards, 2000). This seems like a common trend in the written word—that after sufficient practice and work with writing for oneself, an individuation of style and process occurs for the individual writer. Of course, Margaret Atwood noted, in a BigThink video on the creative process, that "if you're not finding this happening somewhat spontaneously, you probably shouldn't be doing this activity" (BigThink, 2011). How does the writing process seem to emerge to you?

Spontaneously, I'd say, echoing Margaret Atwood, otherwise I would not still be writing! The ideas are always there, the rewriting is what I do in order to refine the language, story, characters, plot.

The current Writer-in-Residence at AU, Esi Edugyan, of *Half-Blood Blues* acclaim, has said, "I have my own office. A space of one's own is crucial. I write longhand and on a laptop, depending on the day. But then sometimes I'll write in cafes, too. I've learned to trust anything that works, and not to push a single place or method" (Well, 2016). And you told Professor Tracy Lindberg of AU that your favorite place to write was "On my couch. On my couch." (CBC Books, 2016a). In terms of assistance to writing, what does the couch provide for you – other than comfort? In other words, why that space?

Yes, a room of one's own or a private space where one can disappear for the writing of a book is ideal, but it isn't always what I need so long as I am at home. My concentration is absolute, so I can work regardless of what is going on around me. I cannot work in public places or hotels and cafes. I have had an office for years now, but most of my home functions as my office as there is nobody at home most of the day. The couch in my living room is a favourite spot when I am working on early drafts of a novel or reading other people's books. When I am in the final stages of the writing process, I move to my office and hole up there and woe betide anyone who disturbs me.

How do these distinct experiences, in India and Canada, in life, merge in your personal writing—if at all?
As I said in response to an earlier question, all my life experiences feed my writing in one way or another.

You've won many awards, your book *The Hero's Walk*, for instance, won the Regional Commonwealth Writers Prize, Premio berto, Washington Post Best Book (2001), International IMPAC Dublin Literary Prize longlisting, Orange Prize for Fiction, and received a Kiriya Prize shortlisting (Badami, 2016). And personally you won the Marian Engle Award for a mid-career woman writer (Badami, 2016). What do these awards mean to you?

I am glad my book received some recognition, but I am also aware that I was lucky. A different jury might have chosen differently. On the one hand a prize is a validation or celebration of one's work by one's peers which is wonderful and gratifying. Prizes also create an excitement around books and writing and get readers and people who might not otherwise have read a certain kind of book to give it a shot. On the other hand, only one book can win a prize, and as a result becomes far more noticed than dozens of other books which are as good if not better.

What responsibilities to the public come with this extensive recognition of excellence?

I suppose the challenge is to maintain a high degree of artistry and craftsmanship, to write the best book I can.

You recently earned placement on the *Canada Reads 2016* shortlist for *The Hero's Walk* (AU News, 2016) along with *Birdie* by Tracey Lindberg, *Bone and Bread* by Saleema Nawaz, *Minister Without Portfolio* by Michael Winter, and *The Illegal* by Lawrence Hill. What does this earned shortlisting feel like or mean to you – especially with these prominent authors earning positions alongside you?

I am delighted and feel very fortunate to have my book on the shortlist with four other very good books.

Now, you described the nature of *The Hero's Walk*, as "About heroism at many different levels. I find it touchingly heroic to just see people living from the day they're born until the day they die, so full of hope. You just wake up every morning and expect the next day to go well. And I find that touching. I wanted to work with that idea: that notion of heroism. And I think that's basically what the book is about" (Richards, 2000). Since the foundation for the novel, lies in the idea of heroism, why heroism in the context of daily living from birth to death?

So many words have been devoted to grand acts of heroism in epic poems, folk lore and mythology. I wanted to tell the story of an ordinary person who, like so many of us, becomes the hero of his own quiet story of loss and tragedy.

What advice made the most impact for you as a young writer?

Write, stand back, look at your writing objectively, rewrite until it is as perfect as you can make it.

Any advice for novice writers?

Try to write every day. Keep a notepad and pen or something to take down your thoughts with you at all times so you don't forget that brilliant idea. Read all the other wonderful books out there and learn from them.

Any closing thoughts?

Writing is not always easy, it can be enormously frustrating sometimes. But there are those moments of pure magic when everything falls into place and life becomes rosy again. That's why I keep writing -- to find that magic again and again.

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Student Sizzle AU's Hot Social Media Topics

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

AthaU Facebook Group

Isabella announces a name change for the Athabasca University Student Mom's and Dad's Club Facebook page. Stephen seeks other AU-related social media sites where he can post a research-related question. Kevin seeks clarification on residency credits.

Other posts include BPA-Human Services, re-enrolling, calculating GPA, and courses HRMT 310, PSYC 402, and RELS 204.

Twitter

@AthabascaU tweets: "Congrats to AU prof @TraceyLindberg for being shortlisted in #CanadaReads for #Birdie! <http://goo.gl/8u1iaz>."

@AU_Business tweets: "Did you know that Apple offers discounts on their products for AU students?

Tools for school <http://goo.gl/EGYXxq>."

Youtube

Teachable moments tax tips by Canada Revenue Agency.



Music Review

Charlotte Cornfield

Samantha Stevens



Musician: Charlotte Cornfield

Album: Future Snowbird

Folk-rock is a difficult genre to pull together effectively. Yet, when folk and rock are brought together in a brilliant harmony, the result is a song that will reach out and touch the very heart of the listener. Charlotte Cornfield's latest album Future Snowbird features such a blend of sounds.

Future Snowbird will be the Toronto native's second album and was released March 11th via Consonant Records. Charlotte has been releasing music under

her own name for the last 10 years, and Future Snowbird is a follow-up to the critically acclaimed Two Horses (<http://charlottecornfield.com/bio/>), which was released in 2011.

While her music is reminiscent of Bob Dylan, Neil Young, and Joni Mitchell, it's also unique. Her voice is an earthy alto that wraps you in a warm, comforting blanket and melts into your soul like butter on toast.

"Mercury" includes Tim Darcy of Montreal's Ought and is my favourite song on Future Snowbird. Tim's voice is strong but he doesn't overpower Charlotte's vocals when he joins her in the chorus and at key points in the song. They harmonize with one another while keeping at opposite spectrums of the vocal scale. One of the things I love most about this song is the dramatic yet soft introduction. It begins with light electronic music that slowly crescendos until accompanied by the folk-inspired guitar and steady drums. Charlotte's vocals burst into the song and capture the listener's attention. Perhaps the part that is the most fun is when the lyrics mention coming together and both Charlotte and Tim emphasize their duet. Charlotte draws attention to key words in the lyrics by saying them just a bit louder as the music abruptly stops.

"Time Bomb" is also a fantastic song, filled with all of the situations and feelings that burrow under our skin. Much like these instances, the piano used in the song works its way into the very marrow of your bones and festers there. The rhythmic plucking of the piano keys fits perfectly with the theme and emotion of the lyrics. Charlotte's vocals are equally dramatic and the lyrics seem more like words of warning and advice best taken.

Overall, I really enjoyed Future Snowbird and Charlotte's talent as a musician is very obvious. I would recommend this album to anyone faced experiences the ups and downs that come with life, and I would also suggest listening to this song when you are in the mood for something different. The album would also be great company during study time.

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

A Student Has to Eat

Carla Knipe



Cost pressures on students are rising. With the economic downturn, many Canadian families are having to deal with job losses and the cost of education continues to increase. For AU students in particular, many of whom are adult learners and have the added pressure of having to feed their family, dealing with the cost of food has become a significant issue.

While the recent jokes about eight-dollar cauliflower have largely disappeared, the rising cost of food is no laughing matter. According to some estimates, the cost of food for a Canadian family rose approximately \$350 in 2015 and is expected to rise by that amount again this year. Many news stories have investigated the sharp rise in food costs, leading to great concern that the days of cheap food may be coming to an end. California, where a large amount of produce that is shipped to Canada originates from, has experienced severe drought for several years and the situation is not expected to end soon.

A thread on the Athabasca University Facebook group about rising food costs resulted in a lively and honest discussion. While many responders conceded that they are feeling the effects of increased costs, they also said that it is possible to still eat well on a budget.

The first step students suggested to managing grocery costs is to go back to the tried and true ways of food frugality; not shopping when hungry, making a list and sticking to it, and resisting those tempting impulse buys on foods that are just empty calories.

Another budgeting tactic is to stop paying for purchases with plastic. Bolt Touma says, "I have moved my budget, including food, over to cash to keep track of it all. Just by moving to paying with cash, I've found that I can easily save 25-30% per week because it's something physical." Another tactic that Vicki Parnell uses "is based on the theory that if I don't enter a store I don't buy stuff I don't need. Buying too much food and then throwing a bunch of it out has been a huge problem in the past. So now I send my husband to Costco with a list (he only buys what is on the list - he just wants to get out of that place) and I order the rest of our groceries online. I figure even paying for the delivery fee, I'm coming out ahead. So far it's actually working pretty well."

Students definitely notice that their grocery costs have increased, which has led to making some tough decisions at the supermarket. Jessica Avery says that she has become far more conservative in her shopping budget and plans meals based around weekly flyers. If an item is not on sale or a staple it doesn't go in her cart. Rebecca Bice has been buying more frozen vegetables and only buying produce that is in season, as those choices are still not too expensive. She also shops the 30% off meat area for deals. Mel Lefebvre observes that "it's maddening that the price of less healthy foods is so low. Fries and chicken fingers, no problem! Veggie dishes? Forget it!" The increased cost of food has made several AU students stop buying organic fruits and vegetables, but they won't stop buying fresh fruits and vegetables altogether because they don't want to resort to feeding their families unhealthy processed food.

But there is some debate among students about whether current food costs are really that bad. Jason Bernard notices an increase in some types of produce such as green peppers and chicken, but has observed that beef seems to be slightly cheaper. He says, "I really haven't changed the way I shop per se. I assign myself a budget per meal per day. So I just shop within that budget. Maybe to some small degree I buy a little bit less processed foods as they generally are outside my budget. However, I mainly like to cook my own meals so it hasn't been that big a deal." Jamie MacDonald agrees with Jason and says that his family's food choices haven't really changed. He says that while food prices have definitely risen noticeably, but not catastrophically, this has been offset by the huge decline in fuel prices. He notes that the price of gasoline has decreased in his area by about 35 - 40% per litre. He says, "We still try to save money on food though. We use the points program at our preferred grocery store which also has a website allowing customers to select items that will get you additional points to save further."

However, this isn't the case for all students. Shannon Deglow was honest in relating her budget constraints and said "It's been extremely difficult to say the least and often we go without. I have had to make bread for the kids' sandwiches throughout the week and their treats such as muffins. We literally scrape by and although I am so tired everyday not only from work but being a mom, I have no choice but to stay up later to make sure they have bread. Sometimes, I have to buy canned fruit and definitely frozen veggies are a must in my house. This completely reminds me of the 90's when the oil and gas field was almost non-existent and my family often had to go to the food bank to feed us. We made it back then and will do it again!"

The members of the Athabasca University Student Moms Facebook page offered many practical tips on what they do to save money on food while also cooking meals that are quick and healthy. Most of the student moms relied on the versatility of their slow cookers and said that it was the best way to provide frugal and nutritious meals with little effort. Cooking a large roast in a slow cooker can provide meat for several meals, including sandwiches for lunches. The slow cooker is also a great way to make a large batch of something, such as pulled pork, which can be placed into zip-top bags to freeze for later. Mis Forts makes lots of slow cooker chilli and lasagnes and uses her slow cooker at least three times a week for spaghetti, stews, roast beef, chicken, and ribs.

Meals such as chilis, soups, and stews are also mainstays for AU's student moms and can be easily turned into vegetarian meals. Vegetables are easily hidden in a tasty soup or stew for picky eaters, and beans and pulses are cheaper sources of protein than meat. Many moms also said that meals don't have to be elaborate every night, and parents shouldn't feel pressured into cooking a large meal every night. Eating breakfast for dinner, such as pancakes, omelettes and baked beans on toast is often a winner with kids. Sandwiches—even something as simple as a grilled cheese accompanied by a bowl of soup—can also break the monotony of mealtime. Mist Mo says that her family eats a lot of stir fries, which are easy to make and easily lend themselves to batch cooking. She said the mixture can be varied to be put on rice one night and noodles the next. She also makes wraps because the fillings can be made ahead and there are a lot of interesting variations.

However, many student moms say that being organized when it comes to meal planning and preparation is the best way to combat the urge to just grab a pizza or takeout, which is a habit that can take a large chunk out of a family's budget.

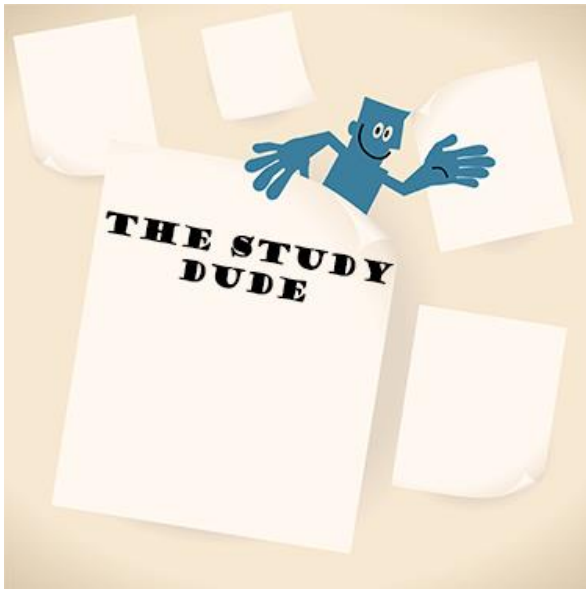
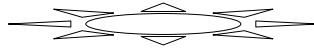
Melanie Forrest takes one day out of the week to do some advance preparation, such as baking some sweet potatoes in her slow cooker or a big batch of brown rice, and cooking a pot of either dried black beans, navy beans or chickpeas. She then refrigerates the cooked items for the week. As she is vegan she finds that this preparation takes some time but is worth it for easy meal options. Milena Raca Calija always cooks two items

on Sundays, a soup and a stew or chilli. She gets home around 6 PM every night and meals must be warmed up quickly for her hungry kids. But if time is really tight, Jeffi Farquharson just whizzes up smoothies using fruit and even vegetables that are past their prime. She puts them in mason jars and they just need a good shake and they are ready to go.

AUSU President Shawna Wasylyshyn admits that it is easy to get stuck coming up with meal ideas when time is short, and recommends the series of cookbooks "Cooking for the rushed" to everyone she meets. She notes that "these books are based on the fact that if you plan ahead, buy your groceries and know at the start of the week what you are cooking/eating every day - you are way less likely to pull out a frozen pizza or hit a drive thru. You can download the grocery list from the website and then just add on the other things you need and its so organized and all-around awesome."

Trying to turn around eating habits can be daunting, but a good place to start is to search for books on living frugally in the local public library. There are also many blogs and recipe resources for cooking on a budget online. Athabasca students are proof that eating healthily and frugally requires some effort and planning, but it is possible.

Carla loves paper. She has far too many books, compulsively buys craft supplies, has several boxes of cards and letters from years back years that she just cannot throw out, but feel free to say hi to her on Twitter @LunchBuster



Study Tips from a Semi-Anonymous Friend

Is Grandma's Grammar Better than the Dude's?

There is nothing more that The Study Dude wants for you than to split your infinitives wisely.

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 helps you gain insight into the grammar debates. Steven Pinker, in his book *Sense of Style*, grapples with grammar to make sense of tense, conditionals, and split infinitives. Sometimes breaking the rules makes sense, even if Grandma says otherwise.

Touching Up the Iffy Stuff: Conditionals

Years ago, at an office meeting, I piped up, "If I were..." and finished the sentence with something I no longer recall. One Ph.D student at the meeting was incensed, and he said, "If I *was*—it's *was* not *were*." I responded that the phrase "If I *were*" was okay when speaking hypothetically. He grumbled. All the post docs remained silent. Later, he approached me—me, a meagre Masters student—and said he learned something from me. My ego bloated, but soon deflated. I didn't understand conditionals, and I knew it.

On one hand, I correctly thought it reasonable to say, "If I were a billionaire for a day, I would keep doing what I do right now." Very hypothetical—and yes, if I were a billionaire, not much would change.

On the other hand, I once heard the 80s musician Phil Collins's song where he sings, "If I was... ." And Phil Collins strikes me as a bona fide genius—maybe even a latent linguist—so I thought he must know something about grammar. Given my high faith in Phil Collins' grammar, my low faith in my understanding of conditionals deepened.

At last, Steven Pinker demystifies doubts about conditionals:

- There are two key kinds of conditionals: open conditionals and remote conditionals.
- *Open conditionals* come into play when the writer is not sure about the situation and the reader is left to guess the outcome. An open conditional would sound like this: "If my loved ones arrive from Mexico before midnight, I will be able to visit them before they venture off to Vegas." In that example, there is a possibility that the loved ones might arrive before midnight. A trick to recognize open conditionals: they use present tense in the *if*-part and present-tense auxiliaries such as *will*, *can*, *shall*, and *may* in the *then*-part.
- *Remote conditionals* come into play when the situation seems like a fairy tale, too good to be true, or extremely unlikely to happen. A remote conditional looks like this: "If I were a robotics specialist, I would advance the idea that robots have consciousness and, therefore, deserve basic human rights." I'm anything but a robotics specialist—so very unlikely. A trick to recognizing remote conditionals is as follows: "The formula is that the *if*-clause must have a past tense verb, and then *then*-clause must contain would or a similar auxiliary such as *could*, *should*, or *might*" (p. 214). [*Could*, *should*, or *might* are in the past tense; *can*, *shall*, or *may* are in the present tense—go figure. If an auxiliary ends with a *d* or a *t*, then you know the auxiliary is in past tense.]
- Instead of saying, "If he would have smiled...", tighten it to, "If he had smiled." The tightened version sounds better.
- If you are using a hypothetical or counterfactual conditional, then use *were*, even with pronouns such as *I* and *he*—as in, "If I were a billionaire... ." Using *were* provides a more formal voice, such as the one you want in writing your essays. Using *was*, as in "If I was a billionaire" is more informal. [So, Phil Collins wrote his song to you as an informal friend, not as a professor.]

Stick with the Past or Stick with the Present: Tenses (and Voice)

I seek to consolidate voice in these articles. One minute I speak about me. Another, I speak about you. To unsettle things further, I also speak of him, her, or them. Although I hope to stumble on a stylebook that spells out how to mix voice, for now, you are stuck with me and you. Pinker sheds some light on voice, but not enough to settle the uncertainty.

I also seek to stick with the right tense. If one sentence in a paragraph sticks with present tense, all sentences in that paragraph should. All of the following tenses form the past: the past perfect (for example, *I had laughed*), past progressive (for example, *I was laughing*), and simple past (for example, *I laughed*). And to make a present tense paragraph, just change *had* to *have* (for example, *I have laughed*), *was* to *am* (for example, *I am laughing*), and use the simple present (*I laugh*). And just stick to the tense of choice: present or past (or future). Tense can't get any easier than this.

Or could it? Well, tense can cause you some tension or tense can be a breeze, depending on which path you take, according to Pinker:

- To make tense a breeze, you could just use the simple present or simple past for all of your sentences. In other words, lop off words like *have/had*, *are/were*, and just stick with the basic verb. Some style guides even advocate for you to use the simple tense as much as possible: simple tense is cleaner and less wordy.
- If your sentence contains a past-tense verb, then make all of your verbs past-tense in that sentence. Similarly, stick to present-tense in a sentence if one or more of your verbs are in the present-tense.

- In the sentence, stick with the voice you are using. If you are using the voice of either first person (I, we), second person (you), or third person (he, she, it, they), stick with that particular voice. [The Study Dude commits this sin regularly, jumping from "you" to "me" to "them."]
- Stick with either only active voice or only passive voice in your sentences. Don't say something like, "I *learned* the rule of threes from a journalist when his book *was given* to me." Instead say, "I *learned* the rule of threes from a journalist when he *gave* me his book." [As an aside, the rule of threes involves using three and only three pieces of evidence to support a claim: one a fact, one an expert or authority quote, and one an experience.]
- Don't mix up indirect quotes with direct quotes in a sentence. Don't say, "Tommy said, 'Eat protein within ninety minutes of weightlifting' and *that* protein powder gives him gas." Instead, use either both direct quotes or both indirect quotes, as in, "'Eat protein within ninety minutes of weightlifting,' Tommy said. 'But eat it sparingly. Protein powder gives you gas.'"
- Journalists should use the past tense.
- When a situation you speak about is true for all time, you can go ahead and use present tense—even if the rest of the sentence is written in past tense: "The supervisor *instructed* that with processing, molten sand *turns* into glass."
- When you report on what someone said in past tense, it's okay to slip into present tense to slide in an aside. For instance, you could say, "A singer said that his vocal coach—a famous French female vocalist—warned him that further singing lessons would corrupt his perfect pitch."

To Be or To Not Be: Split Infinitives

An infinitive is a verb that has *to* in front of it, such as *to eat* or *to go*. We all heard the rule never to split an infinitive. So, don't place an adverb between *to* and *go* as in *to boldly go*. But, hey, Star Trek does it! And Gene Roddenberry, the creator of Star Trek, like Phil Collins, is surely a bona fide genius—maybe even a latent linguist. Yet, every schoolmarm shudders at the sight of a split infinitive. So, if you do as Gene Roddenberry does and split your infinitives, will your professor slash her wrist and mark-up your paper in red?

Depends.

If you really want to be what Pinker calls a prig or prissy, then follow the old rule for infinitives: never split an infinitive (such as *to eat* or *to go*) and never split verbs (such as *am eating* or *had gone*). But, if you want to make your sentences clear, sometimes you must break the rules. Pinker lays out when to split and when not to split an infinitive:

- When you might choose to split an infinitive with a big adverb or a groups of adverbs, don't do it. For instance, don't write "He liked *to superstitiously think* of giant grasshoppers as the sign of doomsday." Instead, put the adverb at the end, as in, "He liked *to think superstitiously*..."
- If the verb has an object, put the adverb or groups of adverbs after the object, typically at the end of the sentence. For instance, do write, "We learned how *to read* Ayn Rand *voraciously*," instead of, "We learned how *to voraciously read* Ayn Rand."
- Most often, an important adverb should come at the end of the sentence.
- Words like only, not, never, even, and so forth fit nicely just before the infinitive. For instance, "We try *never to eat* raw squid while it's squirming on the plate."
- Sometimes, a sentence only makes sense if you split the infinitive. For instance, when you write, "I'm moving to France *to not get* fat," you sound clearer than if you said, "I'm moving to France *not to get* fat" (P. 229).
- Another case where you might be wise to split an infinitive occurs when you don't know to what part of the sentence the adverb refers. For instance, saying, "The board voted *immediately to approve* the casino," the reader is not sure whether the immediacy was on the voting or on approving the casino. You might have to split the infinitive if you mean to say, "The board voted *to immediately approve* the casino."

When in doubt, don't split the infinitive. Saying, "We love to read the Study Dude weekly" will surely get you an A on your next paper. Just say the Study Dude told you so.

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

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Click of the Wrist

Talk About Tolkien

"But in Gondor, the New Year will always now begin upon the twenty-fifth of March when Sauron fell, and when you were brought out of the fire to the King." Gandalf's words in *Return of the King* are part of the story behind **Tolkien Reading Day**, established March 25, 2003 by the Tolkien Society "to celebrate and promote the life and works of J.R.R. Tolkien." Whether you're a rabid Ringer or you've only ever seen the Peter Jackson films, enjoy these more extended glimpses into Tolkien's world(s):

Story and Screen

Both long-time Tolkien fans and new readers alike will appreciate this calm, balanced explanation of how and where the Peter Jackson film interpretations differ from Tolkien's original books.

Love of Language

If you want to delve deeper into Tolkien's linguistic side—the complex languages he invented—check out these resources, lesson plans, and workbooks to guide you through the basics of Sindarin, Quenya, and Tengwar.

One Community to Rule Them All

For those who'd enjoy hanging out with fellow Tolkien lovers, the forums at TheOneRing.com are a great place to chat about the books, the characters, the films, LOTR-related RPGs, and literature, music, and even scholarly topics.



Women Of Interest

Sara Corning, born in 1872, in Chegoggin City, Nova Scotia and died there in 1969. Corning rescued 5000 orphans during the Turkish Massacre. These orphans were mostly Armenian and Greek children under the age of twelve. The children were brought to Greece where Corning established Orphanages to raise them as Christians. In 1923 King George II awarded Corning with the medal of the "Silver Cross of the Savior," which is the highest state award in Greece. Mary Anne Saunders, a cousin of Sara's describes her:

"Her compassion," she says, "was offset by a no-nonsense approach" -- a balance that allowed Corning to tend those in desperate need, all the while in the shadow of danger.

Additional information about Sara Corning as well as the "Sara Corning Centre for Genocide Education" can be found at the following websites:

www.facebook.com/corningcentre/info/?tab=page_info

<http://www.genocide-museum.am/eng/05.10.2012.php>

<http://www.genocide-museum.am/eng/05.10.2012.php>

<http://www.corningcentre.org/our-namesake.html>

compiled by Barb Godin

Canadian Education News

Scott Jacobsen



Keeping AU in Athabasca

The Advanced Education Minister of Alberta, Marlin Schmidt, wants to keep AU in Athabasca, Alberta. Dr. Layton Shaw, President of the Faculty Association, expressed concern about AU staff being gradually moved away from Athabasca. Professional jobs have been reduced in the Athabasca area while shorter-term/contract work in Edmonton has been increasing.

Athabasca's town and county are interested in assisting because the university is the primary employer there, according to Shaw.

And Minister Schmidt has said, "Keeping Athabasca University in Athabasca is very important to me and the Alberta government," and has directed the university to develop and assess options to bring stability to AU."

Our New Brand: EduCanada

The Honourable Chrystia Freeland, Minister of International Trade, unveiled Canada's new brand for education at the Annual Conference of the Association of International Education Administrators (AIEA) in Montreal, Quebec, Canada.

It is called EduCanada. It will have a website to replace the present Education au/in Canada website. EduCanada is to be rolled out in full in the next few months by the Government of Canada, and provincial and territorial governments.

Its logo will appear in "Canadian universities, colleges, CEGEPs, language schools and by kindergarten to grade 12 schools", and will be branded by "materials produced by the Government of Canada."

Edmonton School Board Asks for Help Funding Syrian Students

CBC News reported on more than \$2 million in financial assistance needed for 500 new students by the Edmonton public school board. They are requesting the funding from the federal government to help with the expense.

Board chair, Michael Janz, said, "We are committed to providing a high-quality education for each and every one of our students." He continued to say that the integration of hundreds of new students is a challenge, and that the monetary support request from the federal government is reasonable.

Standard funding from the provincial government is partly from finalized student enrolment figures at the start of the academic year, however, since the students arrived later, no funds were given to the Edmonton public school board.

Fly on the Wall

The Chattering Class

Jason Sullivan



While walking for a study break I looked up and noticed five squirrels silently scampering along a mesh of branches above my head. After hearing so much spring squirrel ruckus in recent weeks their stealthy passage came as a surprise. "Hmm," I thought, "perhaps I'm seeing another side of squirrels." Maybe all conflict contains more than mere repetitive argumentation; perhaps there is potential for the discovery of new joys within old preconceptions. It could be that litigious interactions contain possibilities for actual pleasure. Social media, at present, seems rife with strife as everyone within and without post-secondary education has an opinion on political events down south. Perhaps if we

take a step back some more pleasant realities can emerge from fractious discourse.

Whether it's nuts or numerology, the truth cannot be pinned down like a butterfly in an insect collection. And even if it could, would we want it to? "We murder to dissect" intoned the poet William Wordsworth (Wordsworth, online). In life, and learning, we seek to gather data that will bring us to certainty. Yet, as David Hume once stated, "knowledge resolves itself into probability" (Hume, online). That the sun will probably rise tomorrow is not the same as knowing with absolute conviction that it will. Hume also reminds us of something we know all too well when we furtively and with dismay read the comments in online discussion about political events of the day: "reason is, and ought only be, the slave of the passions" (Hume, online). Beneath the desire for truth lies a vigorous, yet perhaps unreasonable, desire for certainty. The silent troupe of squirrels reminded me that, although they are known most for their chatter, their essence is perhaps much more. Perhaps the essence of our studious inquiry into truth, and voracious desire to acquire knowledge, is based more on a joyous hope for a new mental intimacy than on a litigious impulse to quash all opposition.

Roland Barthes, in *The Pleasure of the Text*, suggests a flirtatious approach to learning and conflict. Like wild animals tussling and testing their boundaries as they pursue potential mates, he asks us to consider how the space between obvious reference points drives us forward in our interactions. Arguments that devolve into mudslinging and personal attacks miss this point entirely. Barthes states that "the most erotic portion of a body is where the garment gapes" and suggests that "the intermittence of skin flashing between two articles of clothing" attracts us far more than the clothing itself (Barthes, 1973, p.9) Just as online litigants often appear similar to naked emperors waving sceptres to and fro, Barthes leads one to consider that beneath superficial differences may lay a similarity that actually binds combatants together. Backstage, as it were, we are all squirrels who run along in the same direction because we share the same basic desires of body and mind.

Conflict, then, becomes a kaleidoscope of self-expression rather than a churning morass of clashing ideas. Barthes succinctly states that "conflict is nothing but the moral state of difference; whenever (and this is becoming frequent) conflict is not tactical (aimed at transforming a real situation), one can distinguish in it the failure-to-attain-bliss, the debacle of a perversion crushed by its own code and no longer able to invent itself: conflict is always coded, aggression is merely the most worn-out of languages." (Barthes, 1973, p.15). As soon as we forget the playful nature of jousting with words, our interactions become animated tropes for which there is no referent in our shared natures as human beings. If opponents disrespect each other, as happens so often in social media, we become less than squirrels who, in the end, assert their differences along the same common

denominator of acquiring the means to life. In as a backdrop to interactions, Barthes asks us to "let difference surreptitiously replace conflict." (Barthes, 1973, p.15).

Besides asserting that within conflict we may discover shared terrain, Barthes also suggests that there is pleasure to be found in the struggle of learning itself. Who hasn't battled with an essay and ended up hating it, at least for a time? Barthes firmly intones that we may achieve a kinder, gentler interaction with a text we are reading. He introduces a word: *brio*, meaning vigor and vivacity, and applies it in terms of Nietzsche's conception of life as being based on a "will to power". "The brio", says Barthes in terms of a text, "is its will to bliss: just where it exceeds demand, transcends prattle, and whereby it attempts to overflow, to break through the constraint of adjectives—which are those doors of language through which the ideological and the imaginary come flowing in" (Barthes, 1973, p. 42). Texts don't want us to hate them, they just want to be understood.

We may see shards of ourselves reflected in a text, even one so turbid that we just wish for the clarity of something we would prefer to read. Faced with a frustrating tome, Barthes asks us to don our Nietzschean animal suits and ask "always the same question: What is it for me?" (Barthes, 1973, p.13). Jurgen Habermas would here note that we each inhabit a personal "lifeworld" which imparts meaning to us according to our social conditions; it's important to realize that each of our lifeworlds are different (Habermas, online). Whether it's a difficult text or an adversarial person, we may find things to enjoy and relate to and maybe learn more about ourselves if we genuinely seek personal meanings.

To find pleasure in interaction with unwieldy course material or with prickly humans, we need only find a tiny fissure through which may shine the light of commonality. Here Barthes introduces a term *traverse* which means 'to cut' as in, along a seam (Barthes, 1973, p.42). When faced with a monolithic opponent of any type, he asks us to find "the seam between them, the fault, the flaw ... the dissolve which seizes the subject in the midst of bliss." (Barthes, 1973, p.41). There's more to a squirrel than a woodland full of chattering and scrapping, and there can be more to challenging coursework or social media warriors than meets the eye.

Beneath preconceptions new truths may arise which bring us closer to a version of our selves we are proud of. And really isn't that what education and self-development is all about? I can't think of a better outcome from my AU experience than learning to see the world and everything within it as part of a whole. Instead of an insatiable desire to be right we perhaps need to consider the underlying substrate of life itself, which somehow finds room for all oppositions. Martin Heidegger, in his considerations of the primordial nature of our being, wonders if "the opposition of correctness and incorrectness, validity and invalidity, may very well exhaust the oppositional essence of truth for later thinking and above all for modern thinking" (Heidegger, 2009, p.26). Beyond probabilities and certainties, and the desire for absolution from the ambiguities of life itself, lies the potential for us to learn and grow by interacting in new ways with the people and ideas around us.

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Making a Connection No Call Centre for FHSS

Deanna Roney



There have been continued discussions about the benefit of a call centre model of tutoring for the faculty of humanities and social sciences (FHSS). While this model has proven to be useful in certain faculties, I do not think it is a "one size fits all" solution.

The FHSS is based on creative thinking, personal interpretation, and can be arbitrary. In the sciences there is one right answer; in some of the FHSS there is no wrong answer. Some courses are primarily teaching formulas or base knowledge such as facts to be memorized, equations to comprehend and understand for

what they are, or relations to interpret and comprehend. In these subjects having a call centre (or, as it was renamed, the student success centre) would be essential to being able to move forward in a course with success. Being able to reach someone at any time and get an answer to a straight forward question (straight forward as in there is a single answer), would be exceptionally helpful. It would make the process easier on the student, who no longer has to wait two days to get an answer to a basic question, and for the tutor, who can then focus on more difficult questions or aiding a student who is struggling. In this scenario I think the student success centre makes sense. It is a win-win situation for both student and tutor alike. As a disclaimer, I am an arts student, and while logistically it makes sense, I am basing my opinion here on both the logic behind it as I see it, and from the comments I have seen from time to time on social media, which show a majority of students in these departments like the student success centre for these reasons.

So, while I understand that the student success centre has an important role in distance education. I do not believe it has a role in the FHSS. My success, and the enjoyment of my courses, have depended greatly on being able to make a strong connection with my tutor. The experience of the tutor in these courses helped me to understand concepts and how to apply those ideas to other topics. They taught me how to think critically. When my understanding was lacking, the connection with them is what made the difference. I think that *if* a student success centre was established in the FHSS, a majority of courses would find that the centre only played the role of "middle-man." I don't believe that the centre would be able to address the majority of questions that students would have, and that they would be pushing them on to the tutor anyway. In this case, the centre would only be an added cost, and not taking weight off the tutor, nor helping students advance quicker. On the contrary, it would cause stalls and likely cause students with questions to attempt to figure them out themselves rather than seek help, as doing so would require they get past the gate-keeper of the centre.

Students are not the only ones with concerns when it comes to implementing the call centre in the FHSS, tutors have many of the same concerns that students do. In these courses it is key to be able to have that connection with a tutor to get the most out of the course, and for the tutor to be able to connect with their students. The implementation of the call centre will result in students and tutors alike suffering a loss.

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

Editors Note: If you have something to say on this topic, the FHSS is hosting a teleconference with students on March 30th to get their opinions. Contact AUSU (ausu@ausu.org) for more details.



Can't Win

The rise and fall of the Oilers hockey team has been well documented by experts and rednecks alike. Gallons of ink have been spilled since the Wayne Gretzky-led Stanley Cup winners carved up the ice at Commonwealth Arena. Callers to talk radio and letter writers to newspapers are not short of criticism or advice. The patience of season ticket holders, fans, and sponsors has been stretched to the breaking point.

The turnover of coaches, executives, and players has fuelled a roller coaster of emotion. There were calls for heads to roll when, years later, the 'boys on the bus' who transitioned into coaching and management roles could not re-create the magic they had once been part of. Think Kevin Lowe, Craig MacTavish, Glen Sather, etc.

The abysmal final team standing the last several seasons led to early round draft picks. Time after time, as the new young savior pulled on a team jersey and sang the praises of the storied history of the Oilers, fan's hopes rose. Surely, now that Nugent-Hopkins / Eberle / Yakupov / Nurse / Hall / McDavid are on-board the team will return to its glory years. Or not.

'Oh, they're still young men. The team is in the re-building phase. We're looking for the right chemistry on our offensive line, on our D. We need everyone to give 110% on a more consistent basis. It's a confidence thing. Injuries have some of our key contributors sidelined so our second and third line has to step up. We need everyone to show up. I've let my teammates down. We've got to find a way to win. When we shoot pucks go in. We didn't get the bounce we needed. We came out strong in the first two periods but eased up in the third. We've got to give our goalie some help; we can't expect him to save us night after night.'

We want to believe. We want to vicariously share in the win column in the exciting and pervasive world of professional sports. I suspect head coaches and players are as sick of saying these inane things as we or the media covering them are of hearing them. And yet...

When the chance to attend one of the last games in Rexall Place came up we jumped at it. We would use comp tickets from Greg's workplace and take Grady to the March 20th game against the Colorado Avalanche. The company is a season ticket holder. I had to print the tickets at home. Stated value: \$262 each.

How the times have changed. When Greg was a boy during the Gretzky years we occasionally got to buy very good tickets for \$17 each; actual souvenir-worthy tickets. Would \$17 buy a beer and pizza slice now?

Since puck drop happened to be Grady's bedtime, we only made it through two periods. It was fan appreciation night with souvenir flags, free popcorn, giveaways, and a half-price sale on merchandise. Today I learned that not only did the Oilers lose another one but so did I. The 50/50 prize of \$58,365 went to someone else. Some of us can't win for trying, from where I sit.

Wedding Mistakes

Dear Barb:



*Dear
Barb*

Barbara Godin

My husband and I met after the untimely death of our spouses. We both have grown children who were, supportive of our relationship. Since we were older and this was not our first marriage we decided to elope. Unfortunately, my daughter was quite upset that we didn't have a traditional wedding and invite our children. She felt slighted and has never let me forget it. She even passed her feelings to my grandchildren, who constantly remind me that they weren't invited to the wedding. For example, when our anniversary comes around, my daughter will act like she doesn't remember and then when I remind her she says, "oh maybe if I would have been invited I would remember." I have heard the same remarks echoing from my grandchildren. Why would someone act like that, we are all supposed to be adults, why can't my daughter act like one? Thanks Yvonne

Hi Yvonne:

Thanks for your letter and congrats on finding love again! As often happens with weddings, people lose track of whose day it is. You need to tell your daughter and your grandchildren that this was your wedding, this was the way that you chose to be married, and that you would appreciate it if they would stop bringing it up and trying to make you feel bad. You could also invite your daughter to host a wedding celebration for you and your husband, that way family and

friends will feel they were a part of your marriage.

Dear Barb:

I am in the process of making wedding plans and I think I am making a mistake, or maybe it's just cold feet! I am stressed out; my fiancée and I are arguing all the time, and I almost feel like I hate everything about him! I feel like I got swept into this relationship because my family and friends liked Mark. He's well educated, has a good job, and is easy going, and I liked all those things about him, but he is also needy and childish, and I feel like I will be taking care of him my whole life. But, maybe I am just overreacting because of the stress of the wedding. I need some advice! Thanks, Heather.

Hey Heather:

All I can say is if you are feeling as strongly as you are expressing in your letter don't go ahead with this marriage. You need to cancel it and both of you see a counselor before you step into something that maybe be end up being a disaster! Let us know how you make out. Good luck Heather!

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.

THE NONPARTISAN:

PUT ME RIGHT



Oh, Andy, I'm in such a pickle! My monthly pal didn't show up! You need to help me find a doctor who can put me right!

Hey, no gal of miine is going down that road! I have principles, ya know—I believe wholeheartedly in the sanctity of life!



Oh, Andy, I'm so relieved to hear that! So should we have a white wedding, or just elope?

Whoa! I hope you don't think we're getting married! My wife has to be a virgin! I have principles, ya know!

WRITTEN BY WANDA WATERMAN



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

IMPORTANT DATES

- **Mar 31:** April course extension deadline
- **April 7:** AUSU Annual General Meeting
- **April 10:** Deadline to register in a course starting May 1
- **April 14:** Council changeover meeting & second reading of bylaw changes
- **April 15:** May degree requirements deadline
- **April 31:** May course extension deadline

Student LifeLine – Help is Here!

It can be hard to ask for help. And sometimes, when you have a question or problem, it can be difficult to know where to turn to find the help you need.

You may not be aware of all the ways that **Student LifeLine** can support you and your family through life's ups and downs. Whether you're facing a personal challenge or an exciting opportunity, they can help you talk through your issues and make positive choices and changes in your life. Their caring, professional consultants are available 24/7 to listen, offer advice and guidance, and recommend resources.

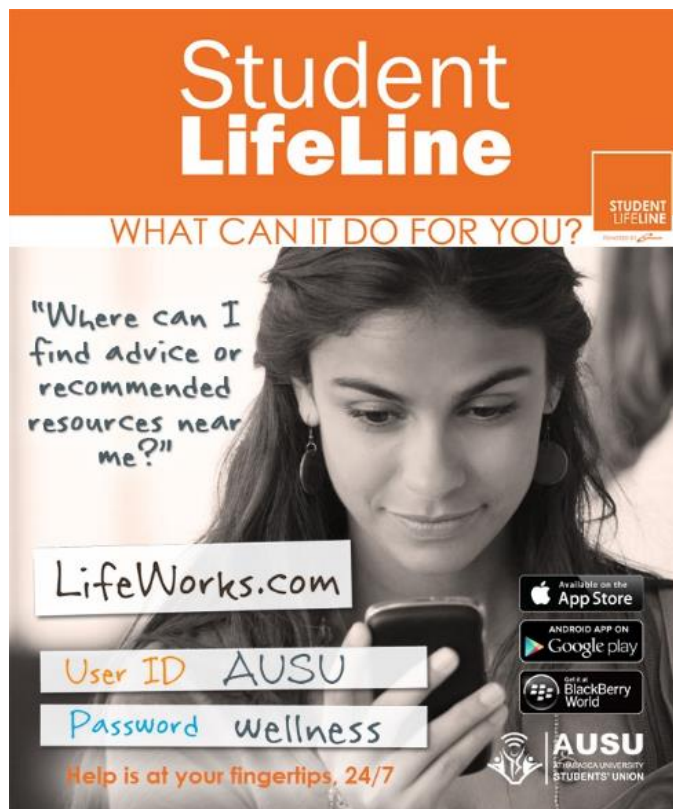
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- Listen to a **NEW** podcast, **Finding a Counsellor, Therapist, or Coach**.
- Learn to relax with the tips, articles, and guided exercises in our **NEW** [Mindfulness Toolkit](#).
- Explore the [Life Changes](#) section designed to support you through transitions, from having a baby to adjusting to a new job, to taking care of older relatives.

Call **Student LifeLine** toll-free, any time
1-800-567-2255

TTY: 1-877-371-9978

You can also visit www.lifeworks.com
(username: **AUSU**; password: **wellness**).



Congratulations to the winner of the 2016 #AUSUSpringBreak Tweetchat!

AUSU hosted a contest from March 2-12 encouraging members to post about what they are planning to do for the 2016 Spring Break. Congratulations to our winner!

Carla @lunchbuster tweeted "Taking my DS to the Lego store, creating terrariums (new project!), and trying to study despite DS playing Minecraft. [#AUSUSpringBreak](#)"

#AUSUSpringBreak



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