

THE VOICE

MAGAZINE

Vol 24 Issue 24 2016-06-17

Meeting the Minds

Dr. Tony Simmons, Part II

At Convocation - Photo Feature

Part I, The Grounds

Convocation

From the Inside

Plus:

Reading for the Road

Interviewing the Associate VP, Part 2

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: <i>Dr. Tony Simmons, Part II</i>	5
At Convocation—A Photo Feature, <i>Part I: The Grounds</i>	9

Articles

Editorial: <i>The Dark Lining on the Silver Cloud</i>	3
Convocation.....	13
Reading for the Road	15
Interview with the Associate VP: <i>Student and Academic Services, II</i>	21

Columns

In Conversation: <i>with Nat Birchall</i>	16
Music Review: <i>A Tribe Called Red</i>	18
The Study Dude: <i>An Angry Committee</i>	19
From Where I Sit: <i>Make My Life Easier</i>	25
Dear Barb: <i>Down on the Farm</i>	26

News and Events

Women of Interest	8
Student Sizzle.....	24
AUSU Update	28

Comic

The Non-Partisan: <i>One Foreigner Too Many</i>	27
---	----

***The Voice
Magazine***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
Deanna Roney
Samantha Stevens
Wanda Waterman
Carla Knipe

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

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

For weekly email
reminders as each issue is
posted, fill out the
subscription form [here](#).

The Voice does not share
its subscriber list with
anyone.

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.

Hey! Did you know the Voice Magazine has a Facebook page?

No kidding! We also do the [twitter](#) thing once in a while if you're into that.

EDITORIAL**Karl Low****The Dark Lining on the Silver Cloud**

If you follow news about AU, you might have come across [this article](#) from David Climenhaga at AlbertaPolitics.ca that looks at various moves by AU's Board of Governors in comparison with what's been coming from the Alberta Advanced Education Minister, Marlin Schmidt. The article notes that the board seems to object in particular to having to run the university without being able to reduce the staffing, as a [recent motion](#) says "That the Members of the Board of Governors are conscious of their fiduciary responsibility to the university, and pass this motion with strong reservations knowing ... the inability of the university to realize a balanced budget at current staffing levels without an infusion of funds from the government."

The report also groups together a couple of other things, including a [blog](#) from a former AU tutor on why she left AU. If you haven't seen that yet, go give it a read, it's an interesting look behind the scenes at AU, and should give us, as students, an even better feeling toward those tutors who give us excellent service.

It was quickly responded to by AU's Communications Director, John O'Brien, who put out a [post on Facebook](#) directing people to Minister Schmidt's [speech](#) at the recent Convocation Ceremonies, where the Minister promised a long, bright future for AU. Critical readers, however, will note that nothing Minister Schmidt says in any way addresses the issues brought up in the AlbertaPolitics.ca article. The NDP could well be planning that AU will have a long and bright future, to be brought about by lopping off the current head of the organization and restructuring it entirely.

After all, from 2014 to 2015, the AU [annual report](#) shows that median pay increase of the five executive members was 9% (p.B24), even though President MacKinnon, as the interim President, came into the job taking less than 75% of the total payment to his predecessor. Yet this increase happened despite dire warnings about the possible solvency of the university as a whole, and during a period when the executive and board seemed to be doing whatever they could to cut staffing costs to those areas that don't seem as vital to them, such as tutors. This would seem to be directly at odds with the Alberta NDP's latest actions where they are looking at various agencies, boards, and commissions, and sometimes taking drastic steps to deal with those committees that they feel are [taking too much](#) for what they provide to Albertans.

However, while this may seem worrying to some (and perhaps heartening to others), what seems to be being said to students is that, whatever happens with the leadership at AU, we can rely on the fact that the university itself is going to be protected, so we can enroll and proceed with our programs with the confidence that one day, we could be walking across that stage getting our degree.

What that degree will be worth, and what AU will look like in a few years' time, however, is anybody's guess. The current trajectory seems to me to be on target to make AU into an accredited version of lynda.com or Udemy if that were possible. And really, it makes sense. After all, as a [recent article](#) in *The Walrus* talked about, almost half of us taking a degree program either wouldn't be doing so, or would be taking an entirely different

program, if we didn't feel that the degree we were pursuing was a requirement for a high quality career. When you discard the notion of a university being a place where students learn how to critically think about, evaluate, and analyse—well—anything, and instead turn it into a place where students get trained in what they need for a job, (or worse, don't get trained in much of anything at all because instructors are afraid to fail students and be poorly rated as a result) it doesn't make sense to be hiring highly educated critical thinkers and paying them wages appropriate to that training to teach what essentially becomes a technical school program.

This is even more true at Athabasca University, where over half of all the funding comes from students' tuition. As any business minded person knows, when the bulk of your funding comes from a specific customer base, you better make that base happy. And students aren't happy when they fail a course, even if it's deserved. So, if the primary concern of the leadership of AU is of their fiduciary responsibility to the organization rather than the academic responsibility of the organization to the society; if, as Dr. Panchuk says, Athabasca University is more concerned with delivering courses than educating students, then this path makes perfect sense.

If you're wondering where this rant is leading, it all ties back into this issue of The Voice Magazine, where we're looking at convocation (both in word and pictures), and we have the second half of our interview with the Associate Vice President of Academic and Student Services, where she talks about what's important for students coming to AU should know about the institution. Both of these articles are strongly positive, and they should be. Graduating from a university degree program, especially an Athabasca one, is a significant achievement.

But the dark lining around that silver cloud is the very notion of the degree itself.

So as you read Deanna Roney's uplifting account of participating in the graduation ceremony, and look at the pictures of the university and the activity going on there around convocation; as you read Dr. May's positive story about her struggles and how she dealt with them to achieve the position she's reached today; as you read Minister Schmidt's words about the future of AU, remember that it's not all roses, and that, as students, we need to be vigilant. We need to make sure that not just the ability to get degrees, but the value of those degrees as indicators of higher learning, not just job training, remains in place. What this means is that we need to celebrate those tutors that are tough, the ones that push us and don't let us get by with work that we know is less than our best. This can be hard, because it means swallowing our pride, and possibly hindering our own success in the short term so that we can have continued success in the long term. I'm no saint when it comes to this type of thing myself, but, before you appeal that grade that looks a little lower than you'd like, maybe take a pause to consider if it's not truly the grade you deserve for what you submitted. The benefit of doing so is that, when you finally do walk across that stage, you'll know you deserve it.

Beyond those, however, this issue also brings us the second part of our Meeting the Minds feature with Dr. Tony Simmons, where he looks at the value of humour in teaching students, and talks about some fascinating encounters he had with pillars of academia in sociology. We also take a look at preparing for your thesis defense. This is especially appropriate if you are one of those students looking at your degree as something beyond a way to improve your employment prospects.

Plus, of course, our selection of news, interviews, advice, reviews, and general entertainment to keep you amused when you're taking a needed study break to clear your head.

Enjoy the read!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Karl", is located in the bottom right corner of the page.

MEETING THE MINDS

INTERVIEWS with AU's EDUCATORS



The following is the second part of our interview with Dr. Tony Simmons, a self-defined Hysterical Materialist. Dr. Simmons is a member of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences and, as his self-written AU faculty listing says, he "has pursued a troubled and an undistinguished career at Athabasca University since 1981."

What is your particular philosophy on student evaluation?

If you elevate it to the level of a philosophy, it's a checklist of things that I try to implement. I'm not really as sophisticated with technology as many of my colleagues.

The Perils of Theoretical Pluralism

Sometimes I feel technology is more of a barrier than a bridge.

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

The influences I've had would be, I suppose, firstly, Socrates, because (in *The Theaetetus*) he outlines what he calls a Maieutic approach to education and teaching. By that, he means it's an approach similar to midwifery.

So, Socrates is saying that, for real essential learning, we have to encourage the student to use those resources within the student. Often, learning is a process of bringing to the surface experiences and methods that the student may not even realize they have as resources.

That's why we think of it as midwifery.

Socrates, but also the radical pedagogical theorist, Paulo Freire from Brazil, who also rejected what he called the "piggy bank" theory of education: students are not empty vessels into which we put our learning and knowledge. That's a negative way of looking at learning.

To Freire, again the student has resources that are the most important part of the learning process.

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

[laughs] Well, it's probably my own distance from a different generation, but if by social media you are referring to texting through iPods and iPhones, I have a kind of negative view because most of the exchanges I've had through texting seem to include what I would call formulaic, clichéd or shallow thinking.

The book I would reference for that is Nicholas Carr's book called *The Shallows*, which is an extended critique of social media, that encourages what we can call the "link culture": namely, that people believe they are educated simply because they can link onto Wikipedia or they can link onto this Website or that Website.

But the link culture does not make provisions necessarily for critical or for analytical, exegetical or empathic thinking.

Do you use the Landing in your teaching practices?

I don't use the Landing. The reason I suppose why (I haven't) is that I haven't really had the time to experiment with it. If the uses are non-credit, most of my students would be disinterested because their time commitments are so precise that anything which isn't going to be used for credit for the course, I don't think they'd be that enthusiastic about.

If you had one piece of advice for online learners, what would it be?

Personalize your relationship with your instructor. Get to know your instructor, so your instructor can get to know you, and you can develop an empathic channel of communication. That comes before everything else.

If you could wave a magic wand and improve one thing about online education, what would it be?

You are pushing me again to my limits because I'm not really a specialist. But, I think I would like to see more synchronous group sessions. I know how difficult that would be with different time zones. I have had some experience in synchronous group sessions held at a time when people from a range of time zones can still manage to log-in to that.

If that's combined with some version of Skype, it can restore some semblance of real class and real time interaction.

What is your view on interdisciplinary studies?

My own view is, and I'm not sure how popular this will be, that it would benefit a student—it would serve a student—to first develop an efficiency in a foundational discipline: to learn a language of a particular discipline, its vocabulary of concepts, its methods of inquiry, its classical literature. After that, then extend out into cross-disciplinary studies: at least the student would have established a frame of reference.

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

My favourite course was Sociology 335, which is Classical Social Theory. The intellectuals I teach about were such (well rounded) Renaissance-like scholars: Marx, Durkheim, Weber, Pareto, even back to Ibn Khaldun.

These weren't economists. They weren't political scientists. They weren't sociologists. They were all of these things. There's something really inspiring about engaging with Renaissance-like intellectuals, both male and female.

I say that with the realization that the role of women thinkers has always been undervalued and often unacknowledged.

Part of my book tries to restore the tradition of (broad) Renaissance-like thinkers.

What does a typical student interaction with you look like?

I think most students get on with me okay because I use humour as an ineradicable part of the educational process. Students need to know that you are a human being, so when they ask me for advice about final exams, for example, after going through a checklist of the obvious things: read the final review questions, check the learning objectives of the course, look at the study questions and feedback from assignments, then I often do something the administration may find controversial, but I say, if you are a Catholic, ask a close friend or relative to light a candle and say a novena, but if you are not a Catholic, then I don't have any ritualistic recipes to offer.

Most of them are amused by that.

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

It would be "*Remember why you chose the path you are on.*" Can I give you two quick examples? Have we run out of time?

I'll try and be really quick here. When I used to teach at the U of A as a sessional in sociology, we occasionally had very distinguished overseas theorists coming. On one of those occasions, we had a guy named Paul Lazarsfeld, who was a hardnosed number cruncher and methodologist.

A lot of sociology departments were politically divided between the right wingers, who were the hard number crunching methodologists, and the left wingers, who were theorists. Lazarsfeld came as a hardnosed number cruncher—an Austrian guy.

After he ended his presentation—and he founded the Institute of Applied Social Research at Columbia University—one of the hardnosed right wingers who was so delighted to have him here asked him, "Could you explain to us how you first came to your commitment to social research in sociology?" Lazarsfeld said, "It's the only way I could combine my passion for mathematics with my commitment to socialism."

These hardnosed guys just melted. They were horrified. He even went on to say, "You could regard me as a Marxist on a leave of absence."

That's one example. The other example was a guy called Nicholas Luhmann, who was the famous protagonist of Jürgen Habermas—a major European theorist. When I sat down with Luhmann, I was briefly with him by himself at the (U of A) faculty club with a couple of beers.

I asked him, "Dr. Luhmann, how did you first come to study social structures and social systems?"

He said, "It was the end of the war when I was still young. When the allied troops came into Germany, I saw what seemed to be such impermeable and solid social structures melt away as though they had never been there.

"The postmaster, who had been a strict Nazi; the police chief; the fireman, all of whom had been members of the Nazi party, all their power dissipated in front of me. It seemed these social structures were so durable, yet they disappeared. I then realized how fragile these structures were."

That made an impression on me. So to answer your question: "Remember why you chose the path you're on."

What if it disappeared?

Well, in that case, you're going to be like a mountain backpacker. You're going to have to follow where it leads.

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

The first course I ever wrote and developed was Canadian ethnic relations. That's why I was hired: to do that course, 380.

Then I was required to do a course on classical social theory, which is still running—with new textbooks. Then I wrote a course on contemporary social theory

I'm just finishing my book up with my publisher on that.

What's the book called?

It's called *Restless Ideas: Social Theory for Troubled Times*.

Nice. What a compelling title.

Then I wrote the course on organizational theory. I'd jointly written a book on that some time ago called *Reading Organizational Theory*.

I wrote a graduate course in advanced social theory: 537. I converted that into 437.

Then I wrote a course on the sociology of war and armed conflict. I'm trying to see if the Royal Military College is interested in using it as an elective.

Then I jointly wrote our research methods course with another colleague: 366.

I'm currently coordinating twelve courses, tutoring four courses, and coordinating nine tutors.

Women of Interest

Lillian Helena Smith was born on March 17, 1887 in London, Ontario, and died at the age of 95 in 1983. In 1912 Smith became the first trained children's librarian in Canada. At 25 years of age she began working at the Toronto Public Library, children's collection, where she remained for 40 years. She introduced many changes and improvements to the children's collection, including extending children's services to 16 branch libraries, 30 schools and two settlement houses. As well, Smith initiated story hour which attracted hundreds of children back in the 1920's and 30's. In 1995 the Toronto Public library named one of its branches the Lillian H. Smith branch. Following the creation of a library school at the University of Toronto, Lillian Smith taught children's literature courses until her retirement.

"The love for a good story, well told, lies deep in every human heart." - Lillian H. Smith.

http://www.amtelecom.net/~manchest/Lillian_Smith/smith.html

<http://www.torontopubliclibrary.ca/about-the-library/library-history/lillian-h-smith.jsp>

compiled by Barb Godin



**At Convocation—
A Photo Feature:
Part I**

*The road leading to and from campus both welcomes
and congratulates the graduates at convocation*



**"The Grounds"
By Deanna Roney**

*The sign guiding graduands into the multiplex where convocation
will take place, just across the road from AU.*



*The sign welcoming grads to campus, where many stopped to take photos.
The parking and campus lay behind, cloaked by the trees.*



*First look at the AU main building from the
parking lot.*



*It was a rainy day, but still beautiful grounds.
Walking by the pond*



The pond outside the main building.



This is where AU has buried a time capsule.



A path through the trees on campus.



Memorial trees and the plaques marking who they're for.



A short walk away from the main building is the iconic one from many AU advertisements.

Convocation

Deanna Roney



As I write this the last group of students is getting set to walk through the crowd to the sound of beating drums. The drums that sent chills of excitement down my spine as I walked down that red carpet only a couple days ago. I watched the live stream last year and I couldn't believe I was there living it, experiencing it. I scanned the crowd while trying to keep my knees steady as I walked, looking for my husband and mom in the crowd. I found them and was overcome with pride when I saw their smiles.

But, let's back up a bit. I had had a long drive to get from here to there. With lunch stop included it took us approximately 13 hours. Knowing this, I wanted to get there a day ahead

of time. I wanted to check out the campus, find where everything was, and take a day to relax before the big day. I am very happy I did. On the bonus day I toured the campus, I walked the grounds and poked through the main building. I went to the library and wandered the stacks looking for nothing but feeling the books around me. The grounds themselves were far more than I expected for an online university. They have taken the time to make them spectacular and I could see myself sitting on the benches in the quiet, studying—if I hadn't already finished my studies. Perhaps the most spectacular part of the grounds were the memorial trees. These were unexpected. As I walked along the path I read the names and took in the tree planted behind them. It was inspiring that this school has such respect for its people that they take the time to put all of this together. I am thrilled that I am connected to these thoughtful people through AU.

The town of Athabasca was larger than I expected and held a history that I took my time exploring as I wandered through the park. I looked at the massive river and imagined the people traversing down it in small boats and canoes. We found, through the recommendation of the receptionist at our hotel, a gem of a restaurant in the 49th Street Grill. There were signs all around Athabasca welcoming the graduates to convocation. It made it feel like I was not entering a strange town but I was entering a place where I had attended school and they were excited to see the graduates descend upon their town.

Convocation day started early. I needed to get some coffee in my system to try to calm my nerves. I tried on a couple dresses I had brought along for the occasion, unable to decide before I left, and opted for one that would not show beneath the gown. It was pouring rain as we pulled up to the grounds; we were first met by a lady wearing her rain coat and directing traffic. We followed her directions and were then met by man, drenched by the rain, helping to direct. He advised that my husband could drop us off at the front door before parking. Perfect, I thought as I watched the rain. Much to my surprise as we pulled up another gentleman walked up to the truck umbrella in hand and kept myself and my mother dry as we walked into the doors. He laughed and told me not to look at the umbrella as he wasn't sure where they had found it; this was "a last second decision" to help graduates get into the building without looking like they had gone for a swim. I felt like a movie star as I walked under the umbrella held by someone else.

The organization and guidance did not stop there. Next I was greeted by a fellow grad who worked for AU and was going to be graduating in the following days. She showed me where everything was and chatted with me like we had

been friends for years, my nerves impeded my memory though, and I cannot recall her name. Every step was mapped out and if I stood there looking lost for too long someone would come up and ask me if I needed help, guide me to where I needed to go. As someone who guided me to my seat stated: everything was organized with military precision. And it was. From the gowning to the pictures and walking up there was someone there to ask, to guide, to calm. I befriended the lady sitting next to me who was similarly nervous. We chatted while we waited for everyone to find their seats. When the time came to make the procession we all stood and a nervous, excited energy soon overtook the room (or perhaps just me). My knees were shaking as I stood there ready to walk in and I realized this was it. After years of work, after deciding to take the plunge back into school, I had done it. The line started to move.

Organizers stood on the sidelines and made sure we were all in the right order and going the right way. When I walked through those doors I was overcome with emotion, with pride. The beating drums guided us down the aisle. We found our seats and stood for the beautiful rendition of O'Canada, sung by ASANI, before sitting and listening to the speeches. I had a hard time hearing the words which were being spoken. I thought it was from where my chair was in relation to the speaker. My comrade in nervousness agreed that she couldn't hear either. It didn't make it any less pleasurable however as soon we were watching our classmates cross the stage. Classmates that we did not know, or knew only by name through chatter online. Our designation was next. I watched closely as each person crossed the stage, "do I shake hands? Do I not shake hands?" some did and some didn't. I decided I would play it by feel.

Then I'm next and I hold my hands clenched in front of me. Breathe, breathe, breathe. They call my name and I walk onto the stage to accept my degree. In this moment I am in awe, and it has finally struck me. I have finished my university degree. While what I hold in my hands at that moment only symbolizes the degree (as my parchment arrived in the mail the week prior) it cements it in my heart and mind that this is it. I am in a daze and I do not hear the personalization they are saying. How did they write out the answers to the questions? I have no idea. I am flying high at this moment and I hear nothing until they say my name again and it is my cue to leave the stage.

I discovered upon finding my seat that I could suddenly understand everything that was being said. I was grateful to be able to hear the speech given by a fellow student; who very eloquently touched on what it means to be a mature student and a life long learner. Then we prepared to leave the stage. Professors and alumni exit first and graduates follow. The drums were beating as we made our way off the stage and through the crowd. As I expect to leave the crowd I am shocked when I see the remaining aisle lined by those I thought had already left. They stand and clap as we walk by and I find myself overwhelmed. There is a pride within them, they all smile and seem genuinely happy to be there and proud of each student that is walking away grasping their degree. As I walk I see a tutor who impacted me greatly, she is smiling and looking directly at me. I am filled at that moment with such an intense sense of accomplishment, I nearly trip. I doubt anyone noticed.

Going to Athabasca for convocation was an incredible experience. There are no words to express how much it meant to me to make the pilgrimage there and to meet fellow students. And to also get the opportunity to meet a professor who has had such an impact on my confidence and skill. Attending graduation, meeting wonderful people, and seeing the university grounds underlined my accomplishment. It felt real in those moments, in the steps on campus, and in the smiles that greeted me as I left the stage. I encourage all who are considering going to their convocation to go. To take the time to see the school and to meet others. To walk across the stage and accept your degree; it is a beautiful and unique ceremony.

I would like to take this moment to give heartfelt congratulations to fellow graduates of 2016.

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

Reading for the Road

Barbara Lehtiniemi



They say travel broadens the mind—and it does. So do books. If reading books broadens the mind, and travelling broadens the mind, then reading books while travelling must really give the old noodle a workout.

Travelling is conducive to reading. For starters, you're on vacation and (theoretically) have more leisure time. Additionally, travel often comes with pockets of unavoidable waiting time—waiting for the train, plane, or ferry, for example. There's a reason why they sell so many books at airports!

When I travel, I usually take several carefully-selected books along. Until I got an e-reader, half

my carry-on bag was weighed down with absolutely essential reading material. Now I discipline myself to take only my e-reader, which leaves a lot more luggage space for other travel necessities. (Note to AU because I know you're reading this: I do not read e-texts on my e-reader; my Kobo simply isn't suitable for anything but leisure reading.)

Matching my reading selections to my travel destination has become a fun way of getting more out of a trip. Reading *about* and being *in* the same place takes mind-broadening to a higher degree.

History, for example, comes alive if you can read about it on location. After travelling to Cuba for vacation one year, I realized I didn't know much of the country's history before the revolution. The next time I visited, I took along *Cuba: A Concise History for Travelers* by Alan Twigg, to learn about what happened in Cuba before Castro. I also took *Cuba Diaries: An American Housewife in Havana* by Isadora Tattlin to get an outsider's view of current life and culture in Cuba's capital. Reading both in Cuba's sultry heat heightened the travel experience.

I find it fun—and enlightening—to read about other travellers' experiences while I travel in the same places they wrote about. When I was in Finland, I read Robert M. Goldstein's *Riding With Reindeer*, an account of his bicycle tour through Finland. I began my journey in Helsinki, just like Goldstein, and then I travelled north to Lapland by train and bus. It was interesting to read Goldstein's impressions of travelling the same route on a bicycle.

While driving the ring-road in Iceland, I was able to enjoy Iceland's spectacular scenery through both my eyes and those of Stephen Markley. Markley's book, *Tales of Iceland*, followed the same route, although the youthful Markley spent more time in bars meeting Icelandic women than I did. To virtually travel off Iceland's beaten track, I read *Fight the Wild Island* by Ted Edwards, where the author undertakes a solo trek across Iceland's remote interior.

Some travel reads are less place-specific but still enlightening and entertaining. In *The Traveller: Notes from an Imperfect Journey Around the World*, Montrealer Daniel Baylis recounts a year he spent volunteering in twelve different countries. In *Far and Away*, Neil Peart explores North and South America by motorcycle. The classic

Around the World in 80 Days by Jules Verne is a great travel read, too. And for a bit of travel stress-relief, I can recommend *Traveling While Married* by Mary-Lou Weisman, but only if you have the ability to suppress giggles.

Last year, I attempted to read *On The Road* by Jack Kerouac while I travelled west by Greyhound bus. Perhaps it was the distraction of the passing scenery but I just couldn't get into Kerouac's book. Instead, I listened to music on my ancient iPod, trying to match Canadian tunes with journey locations (peak moment: listening to Blue Rodeo's *Western Skies* as Banff hove into view.)

This year, our travels take us east. Later this summer I'll load up the Kobo with east-coast history, culture, and flavour. I already know what I'll be reading for my first visit to Labrador. Since we'll be driving the remote Trans-Labrador Highway, I've chosen *A Woman's Way through Unknown Labrador* by Mina Hubbard. It seems appropriate reading for *that* road.

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



In Conversation with Nat Birchall

Wanda Waterman



Jazz saxophonist Nat Birchall from northern England is largely self-taught, crediting Jamaican dub music for launching his love affair with music. Iconic British DJ Gilles Peterson calls him one of the best musicians in the UK. Recently the *Mindful Bard* recommended his latest album, Invocations, a rhapsodic jazz album that bears up well under infinitely repeated listenings and carries on the Birchall tradition of transcendent-sounding album titles like *Akhenaten*, *Guiding Spirit*, and *Sacred Dimension*. Recently Nat was kind enough to answer some of our questions about his background and musical aspirations.

"Music expresses that which cannot be said and on which it is impossible to be silent."

- Victor Hugo

Tell me about your childhood.

My childhood was generally happy—yes, very happy even. We lived, until I was eight anyway, in a large old house about a mile and a half from a small village in the northwest of the UK. We had no electricity or any type of modern convenience apart from a battery operated radio in the kitchen/living room, and we were surrounded by fields and hills and woods; it was idyllic, really.

There was nothing in my childhood that pointed me to music, jazz or otherwise. That would come later, when I was about 13 or so. No one in my family was musical, although my mother would sing around the house as she did the housework. I vividly remember hearing Elvis Presley singing "Devil In Disguise" on that radio we had,

and I heard someone singing "English Country Garden." We also had an old wind-up gramophone and some 78s, but I don't remember any of them.

When I was 13 or 14 I started to listen to music on the radio— pop and rock music mainly, I suppose. And I started to buy records in late 1971 or early 1972. But then I heard some reggae music somewhere and that resonated with me for some reason. I then began to buy reggae records and hunt them down with some seriousness.

In 1978 I bought my first jazz LP: John Coltrane's *Blue Train*. I had read about him in a magazine, *Black Music*, which I bought every month to find out about new reggae releases.

Sometime in the mid 1970s I bought a cheap guitar from a relative and tried learning to play blues and Bob Dylan songs on it myself. But, long story short, in 1979 I bought an ancient saxophone, intending to just mess around with it for fun. The sound of it did something profound to me and I just never put it down again.

What was your most beneficial educational experience?

I haven't had much musical education, not in the academic sense anyway. When I first started to play I took some lessons from a local jazz saxophone player, but he had a kind of vague teaching style and after a couple of years or so I stopped going.

The only other "education" I had was many years later, when I'd been playing for 15 years. I enrolled in an HND (Higher National Diploma) jazz studies course. It was a two-year course but it wasn't particularly helpful in developing my understanding of the music— except for the fact that it allowed me time to practice!

As I've learned to play and learned about music, I've learned about myself. And I've learned that I have to discover things for myself in order to really understand them. I'm not very good at receiving information and assimilating it; it really has no meaning to me unless I experience it myself.

Describe a typical rehearsal.

We don't rehearse. The way the music is structured means that, with the right musicians, we can talk briefly about the song and often play it right away with only a minimal run through of the first part or so.

What's your next project?

I don't know what the next project is, but at the moment I'm working on a reggae/dub album. This is something different for me, even though I've been listening to the music for the past 45 years or so. I bought a bass guitar and have been writing the bass lines and recording them with drums. Then we'll add the other instruments on top. It's very different from playing all the music live in one afternoon and not doing any overdubs, but I'm enjoying it immensely!

I also have a new (jazz) album ready for release. The album is called *Creation* and should be out sometime this summer on my own label.

If you had an artist's mission statement, what would it be?

Through honesty and truth, and a lifetime of hard work, we discover beauty.

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

Music Review

A Tribe Called Red

Samantha Stevens



Photo by Falling Tree Photography

Band: A Tribe Called Red

Single: "Stadium Pow Wow ft. Black Bear"

Starting the summer festival season off with an epic track, A Tribe Called Red just dropped their latest single "Stadium Pow Wow ft. Black Bear". This track follows their widely successful EP *Suplex* released to an eager audience last May.

Since their founding in 2010, A Tribe Called Red has been shaking up the electronic music world with their epic pounding beats combined with traditional indigenous pow wow vocals and drums. Consisting of three members, DJ NDN, Bear Witness, and Zoolman, A Tribe Called Red has been gaining a lot of fame and attention both

in Canada and abroad. Their second album, *Nation II Nation*, was shortlisted for the Polaris Music Prize, nominated for four Aboriginal Peoples Choice Music Awards, Best Group, Best Producer, Best Album and Best Cover Art, and the group won the 2014 JUNO Award for Breakthrough Group Of The Year.

A Tribe Called Red's music combination brings not only traditional indigenous music to the world, but it helps share, and rekindle, Aboriginal culture and art. Through their Electric Pow Wow events in Ottawa, A Tribe Called Red has been able to facilitate an increased awareness for Aboriginal culture and issues while providing audiences with an amazing live show that combines traditional with contemporary. Members of the band are not shy about their support for Aboriginal issues, and the band openly condemns Aboriginal stereotypes, and has provided support for Aboriginal movements like Idle No More (<http://thewalrus.ca/electric-powwow/>). However, perhaps most importantly, through their work and music the band has become a point of pride for the Aboriginal community and important role models for many Aboriginal youth across the country.

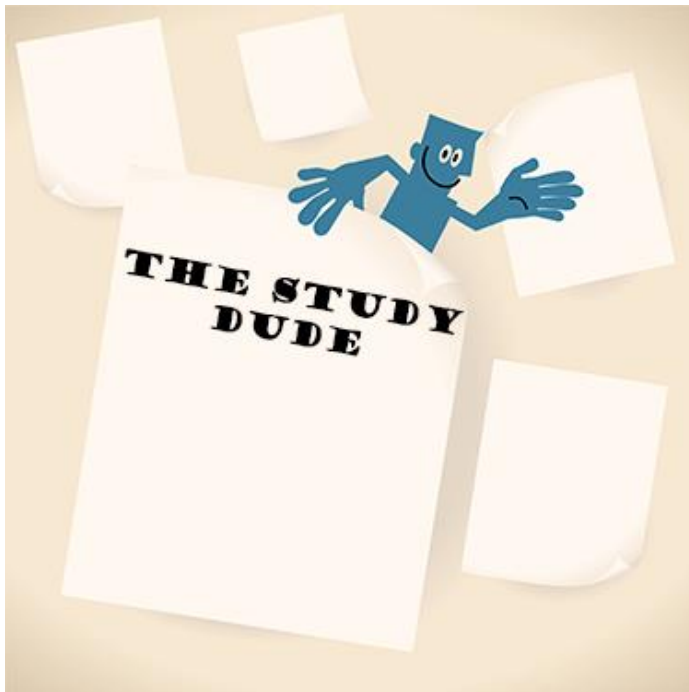
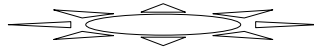
"Stadium Pow Wow ft. Black Bear" is an amazing combination of intense electric beats, traditional pow wow drums and singing. The electronic music features lots of reverb and a heavy sound, but it works perfectly with the singing since it fades slightly when the vocals emerge. The beat is steady and infectious and is sure to move audiences.

When asked by Anupa Mistry of *The FADER* via email about the song, A Tribe Called Red had this to say:

"This song represents a new era for A Tribe Called Red. It's not the first song that we have released with Zoolman or Black Bear, but it feels very special to us because it was one of the first songs we worked on with Zoolman and also the first time we worked closely with a drum group. Doing that was the realization of a dream that the band has had for years, and we are super thankful to Black Bear for being open minded about it." (<http://www.thefader.com/2016/06/02/a-tribe-called-red-stadium-pow-wow-premiere>).

"Stadium Pow Wow ft. Black Bear" is an amazing track coming from such an extraordinary Canadian and Aboriginal band. And for audiences who want to check out A Tribe Called Red this summer as they tour across Canada, be sure to check out their tour schedule on their [website](#).

Samantha currently uses her skills as a writer to promote independent musicians and raise awareness and support for many global, environmental, and humanitarian issues. Check out her website and blog at: <http://sstevenswriter.wix.com/writer>



Study Tips from a Semi-Anonymous Friend

An Angry Committee

There is nothing more that The Study Dude wants for you than for you to defend yourself against a hostile thesis committee.

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 further explores *InterViews: Learning the Craft of Qualitative Research Interviewing* by Svend Brinkmann and Steinar Kvale. Find out if you

have the qualities of an interviewer. Know how to stand up to a hostile committee.

Are you Fit for Interviews?

Are you the kind of person who can ask a stranger questions and recall trivial details? In other words, are you fit for interviews?

I'm not. In fact, when I interview someone, I zone out. Or else, I think exclusively of something they said that I want to clarify. And when the interviewee changes the topic, my only follow-up question no longer works.

Brinkmann and Kvale's book taught me how to stay alert in interviews. By paraphrasing and probing the interviewee, I stay engaged.

These tricks also work in everyday conversation. For instance, whenever my friend makes a comment, I paraphrase it in a unique way. In doing so, I offer him my full attention. As an added benefit, I deepen my involvement in his dreams and goals. Thus, his dreams become mine.

So, learning the craft of interviewing can nurture intimate relationships. And anyone can learn the art of interviewing.

But Brinkmann and Kvale might disagree. They say that certain traits make for good interviewers:

- Pay close attention to the interviewee. Interviewers must craft good follow-up questions quickly and thoughtfully.
- Know the topic intimately. Yet, the interviewer should shy away from sounding like a know-it-all.
- Questions should be brief and clear. Don't use jargon.
- Listen closely and don't interrupt. Feel comfortable with pauses.
- Listen with empathy. Try not to touch on topics too emotional for the interviewee. Notice the nuances of what the interviewee does and doesn't say.
- Open yourself to the subject matters important to your interviewee.
- Steer the interviewee back on topic when necessary.
- Listen critically. Don't accept things blindly.
- Remember what the interviewee said before and ask for clarity where needed.
- Ask for clarity on your analysis. Ask whether your interpretation reflects the interviewee's intended meaning.

Defend Your Interview

When you go into your thesis defense, you need to defend your interview. Why? Many faculties pooh-pooh interviews for lacking scientific soundness.

Plus, some tyrant on your committee (your supervisor) might embark on a mission to destroy you.

For instance, during my graduate studies coursework, a feminist instructor said she would gladly sit on students' committees. But, if they ever offended her, she would destroy them. Her comment seemed directed at me.

Later, when I prepared for my thesis defense, my first supervisor, who departed with me on bad terms, was now on my committee.

We fought often. And days before my defense, during a heated argument, she refused to serve on my committee. She stormed out of the room. My male supervisor, in response, called it quits. My committee of two crumbled.

But, hearing my sobs, she felt compassion, returned, and agreed to continue.

Then the actual defense came. She was thrilled when I seemed composed and praised me for every clever rebuttal. She even encouraged the other professors to communicate with me in a friendly way. That day, I graduated with an M.A.

Yet still I scorn her.

So, no matter who's on your committee, hope for the best but prepare for the worst. If you choose interviews as your method, ready yourself for potential attacks from your committee. Brinkmann and Kvale outline criticisms you might face for using interview methods:

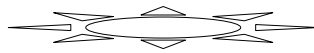
- Interviews get criticized for not being scientific. Respond by saying that what counts as science is open to interpretation. No set definition of science exists.
- Interviews get criticized for not being quantitative. Respond by saying that qualitative methods often appear in social sciences; thus, interviews have merit.

- Interviews get criticized for being subjective and not objective. Respond by saying that what counts as objective could have multiple interpretations.
- Interviews get criticized for not testing hypotheses. Respond by saying that interviews do test hypothesis at times, such as when the interviewer asks for clarity or probes or uses leading questions.
- Interviews get criticized for being biased. Respond by saying that interview biases can bring forth new dimensions—multiple perspectives.
- Interviews get criticized for use of leading questions. Respond by saying that leading questions, if done properly, can test whether the interviewee's responses are consistent.
- Interviews get criticized for not being generalizable. Respond by saying that new knowledge does not necessarily apply to all situations. The knowledge accessed often depends on context.

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

Brinkman, Svend, & Kvale, Steinar. (2015). *InterViews: Learning the Craft of Qualitative Research Interviewing*. Los Angeles: Sage.



Interview with the Associate Vice President Student and Academic Services, Part II

Scott Jacobsen



Dr. Alain May is the Associate Vice President of Student and Academic Services for Athabasca University. She was kind enough to take some time from her busy schedule so that The Voice Magazine could bring you this interview. This week, we look at her research, and what she feels is important for students of AU.

Your AU page says that your research interests reside in "enterprise systems, system implementation, and gender and information technology" and "user competency and IT outsourcing"

(Athabasca University, 2015). Why these research interests? What interrelates them?

I think that, especially when we talk about the first three - "enterprise systems, system implementation, and gender and information technology" – those arise out of my experience in industry. My last role at JDA Software was in enterprise systems and system implementation. It was the guiding decision for me about choosing to go back to school -- to think about how we can implement enterprise systems in ways that are more successful in the organization.

Enterprise systems are big cross-organizational systems. They bring challenges to organizations because they affect business processes across the entire organization. They bring so-called "best practices" to organizations

-- practices that might work in other organizations but don't necessarily fit with every process that an organization has. These and other things cause challenges in how you do the system implementation. But having been involved in this industry, it is an area of interest for me -- understanding how we go about these implementations.

Gender and information technology is one that, I think, also comes from my own experience. I went into computing science in something like 1982 (betraying my age!). However, there weren't many women in the field at the time. There aren't many today; we certainly haven't found some 50/50 place. So I'm interested in the ways in which IT is gendered. Both in terms of process and in why it is that it is gendered. So, that's the interest in those areas, which come out of the background in industry.

User competency and IT outsourcing were two that really arose for me because I worked with some colleagues doing work in those areas. I had the opportunity to become involved and found them interesting. I haven't done a lot in the IT outsourcing area. I have one paper around IT outsourcing, but, certainly, user competency (how we develop information technology skills) is of continued interest. I would definitely say that the first three -- enterprise systems, systems implementation and gender -- would be my bigger areas of interest.

Tell us about Kibera, Nairobi, where you are developing the implementation of an electronic health record (EHR). What is this and what will it do?

Yes! I will say at the outset that in my new role I just haven't had much time to be continuing with this project. So, it isn't something I am currently working on to my disappointment; if I find some time to get back to this group, I certainly will.

An electronic health record is the electronic version of the patient chart. It stores the information about an individual's health encounters into an electronic information system.

Kibera is a large slum area in Nairobi. Because it was considered an illegal settlement, there isn't any government provision of healthcare. As a result, there are a lot of different kinds of healthcare clinics that have been started by various NGOs. There are HIV clinics, TB clinics, child and maternal health clinics, but they're all very focused on specific diseases or chronic conditions, or specific kinds of healthcare. So if you're a resident in Kibera, there are few places where you can get care for the whole person. There is also no continuity of care across clinics.

So, the notion here was to create a cloud-based electronic health record. Different clinics could sign on to be part of the network, and they could share the electronic health record to create greater continuity of care in the provision of healthcare within Kibera. Clearly, this is critical to providing strong healthcare.

The project is also intended to impact the residents of Kibera through improved referrals. You could go to the one clinic in Kibera that has an ultrasound machine and be able to more easily share the results of that ultrasound with the clinic that sent you there. As well, by connecting the system to geographic information systems, it may be able to pinpoint epidemiological issues that are happening in Kibera. A final benefit is that, partially because of the lack of information about healthcare in the area, there is almost no provision of health insurance. So, there was a notion that once this got up and running we would have better information on healthcare outcomes and that might lead to possibilities for healthcare insurance.

As the Associate VP of Student services, what do you think tends to attract students to AU?

I would say different things for different students; I don't think there's one thing. If there is a common factor, it is probably flexibility, whatever flexibility happens to be for a particular person. You work full time. You have family at home that you need to take care of. You don't want to leave your community. Regardless of your life context, you can seek education and work it around whatever happens to be going on in your life.

But flexibility is probably not the key attraction for every student. Some people just like the online environment better, I suppose!

What is important for students to know about academic and student life coming into AU?

I think students need to know they aren't alone here. It is making sure that students know that they are part of a community. They should and can reach out to their tutors, academic experts, and course coordinators about the course to seek academic support.

We have a strong set of student service professionals to help them: advisors, counsellors, our ASD unit for students that requires their services, and student communities through the AUSU and AUGSA, even Facebook. There are communities of support around being a student at AU that when you're sitting in your office in your house working on a course might not be as readily apparent to you, but they're there. My experience in education was that community is important. Students need to know that these supports for students exist at AU.

What is the single most important moment in an instructor's life when teaching?

It is that moment when you know that you have reached a student in a way that has been important in their life in some way. That they understood something that they didn't before. That you helped them achieve a goal of theirs. That you maybe helped them in a reference to a new job, right? It is knowing that you made a difference. That is the most important moment.

How can you make this connection with students in spite of the online nature of education at AU?

It's interesting. The mechanism is different, but overall I don't think the important part changes. I have taught in a traditional environment, and I have taught at AU. It is making yourself available and open to those conversations. So, in a traditional institution, the students still have to know that they can come up to you at the end of a class or come to your office. It is about creating that same accessibility, even though instead of coming to your office, they will be calling you or contacting you through email. It's about making sure that they know you are available and that you encourage that contact, regardless of how that contact is mediated.

What has been the greatest emotional struggle in personal life?

I was doing my PhD. It was early 2000s. My husband and I were involved in the technology area during the Dot-com bust and I needed to do quite a bit of sessional teaching to be able to finish my PhD. So I was teaching, trying to finish a PhD, I had four kids, and then I ended up going through a divorce. It was extremely challenging. I mean, the number of times I thought, "Oh, I just cannot finish this."

Whether the details are the same or different, I feel like it is the story of what our students are going through. It is trying to complete these goals in their lives while real life is happening. It was an extremely challenging time for me, and getting through it was about reaching out to the whole community of people I had. When I thought to myself, "I don't think I can do this anymore. I have to quit." It was those communities of people around me that helped me keep going.

What about professional life?

This is interesting. I think the one that strikes me the most is my first job out of university. What's interesting is the university environment is stressful, and in ways that you're not prepared for coming out of high school, which is when I did my undergrad degree. It was a struggle, but then that first job out of university was emotionally difficult because it was my first experience with having to manage many stakeholders, delivering on something that mattered more than just if I got a good grade on it. I had clients depending on me, other team members depending on me, and learning how to manage those stresses was a challenging time for me.

That's the one that strikes me the most, learning how to manage some of those demands that kind of go beyond yourself. And I think that first experience of it for me was challenging.

So What advice do you have for women in education who may have dependents, or are going through emotional struggles, to get the support that they need?

That's really interesting and hard. I don't know if I feel comfortable giving advice to anyone. I can speak about what worked for me and that is being willing to seek other people's help, so as I said, when I asked myself, "Oh, can I do this anymore?" I went to my family and friends and asked for advice and asked for counselling, and support. My mom did a lot of babysitting. (Laughs) And those were all important things. It was looking around me in my community and in my circle for people who could support and who were willing to support. It was about talking openly with my own family, my children, and asking for their support – bribing them with a family vacation when I finally finished my PhD. They picked the vacation we went on! (Laughs) It was very much those things, and it was a little bit of just digging in, knowing what it was that I needed to achieve for myself – knowing that I would have been disappointed had I not continued.

I could've chosen to take some time out and people have to make those decisions along the way too. I decided, at the time, to just put one foot in front of the other and not get too overwhelmed, and so it was about very much seeking support throughout my community.

Any feelings or thoughts in conclusion?

I don't think so. I think it is such a wide-ranging interview. I really wasn't sure if I wanted to share some of the personal challenges, but I do think that it's really important that students know that many of us at AU have gone through similar things, too. There is support here. And I think that being open about the kinds of experiences we've achieved or had along the way is important.

I hope that's helpful in some way.

References

Athabasca University. (2015, May 11). Dr. Alain May: Associate Vice President, Student and Academic Services.

Retrieved from <http://ovpa.athabascau.ca/staff/amay/>.

LinkedIn. (2016). Alain May.

Retrieved from <https://ca.linkedin.com/in/alain-may-29795411>.

A native British Columbian, Scott Douglas Jacobsen is an AU undergrad and AUSU Councillor. He researches with various organizations and runs In-Sight: Independent Interview-Based Journal, and In-Sight Publishing.

Student Sizzle AU's Hot Social Media Topics

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

AthaU Facebook Group

Curtis wants to know if he can get a full refund if he withdraws from a course within 30 days. Melissa seeks advice on getting a student loan through the AB government. Laura is trying not to get distracted by a box of new course materials.

Other posts include used textbooks, student meet-ups, and courses ACCT 453, CMNS 358, FREN 100, IDRL 312, and SCIE 326.

Twitter

@AU Press tweets: "Is it fall yet? We can't wait for these books to be released! <http://ow.ly/2FeL301fBAR>."

@AthabascaUSU (AUSU) tweets: "AUSU is hosting a Meet & Greet in Edmonton at 4pm on June 24. Free refreshments & AUSU swag! <http://bit.ly/1XaO65u>."

Youtube

Get a sneak peak at Athabasca in this welcome video for the 2017 Alberta Services for Students Conference (ASSC), Athabasca University and "Going the Distance".





Make My Life Easier

My collection of business cards irks me. Because I'm a bona fide card picker-upper the pile is getting out of hand. Depending on the day I may have two, three, or four to remove from my purse.

They are then dumped on my desk. If I need to follow up in some way they stay front and centre as a visual reminder. Last week at a fixture store I managed to barter a used female mannequin (without arms) for three dozen pyrohy. The catch is the store manager has to come to Babas & Borshch Ukrainian Festival in August in order to collect! The transaction was fun and I scored a couple of clearance priced stanchions. Naturally, I wanted to do a shout-out to them on social media. The card gave me the details.

Sometimes I need to make a call or write an email. Often I want to add the details into my computer's email address book or smart phone contacts. If the card is for my personal use I may need it to make a medical or beauty appointment. Sifting through a two- or three-inch pile of unfiled cards isn't fun.

So, one afternoon as I half-watched a made-for-TV movie, I gathered the loose cards, two three-ring binders and sheets, and a business card box for those that defy sorting. After separating the work cards from the personal ones, I dealt with the duplicates.

As I looked at the ones in the binders I knew many of them were outdated. I noticed the telltale perforated edges of do-it-yourself cards. I admired the beauty of others. I used this exercise as a memory jogger. Sometimes the name on the card is more important than the business or organization they represent. I hadn't thought about some of these people in years. On some I had written notes or added context to the card.

Other times, especially with doctor's cards, I remembered specialist visits. I teared up again as I handled my dermatologist's card. It was Hilary who told me this thirty-something brand new mother died suddenly in March. She was lovely, caring, competent, and I'll miss her. I mourn her lost potential. Others reminded me of the nincompoops or arrogant jackasses who managed to open medical practices.

Although there are (of course) apps for scanning business cards into smart phones, for now, I'm a holdout. I like that some cards have maps on them. That some have space for recording appointment details. That some convey additional information on the back.

I have a priest's card with a scripture verse on it. Other cards with micro messages on handling media interviews, introducing speakers, daily renewal, remembering names, rituals of visionary leaders, and a seven-day challenge. I don't think there's an app for that. But I do know it's very time consuming to manually enter contact info into a phone, so maybe I have to break down and buy some help. Luckily I can use all the tools to make my life easier, 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

Down on the Farm

Dear Barb:

I grew up in a farming family, three previous generations of farmers. So it was always expected that me and my brother would become farmers. My brother is heading in that direction, but I chose to go to university instead. My parents are heartbroken that I did not choose farming. I can tell my dad is offended that I did not want to follow in his footsteps. I do not see farming in my future, the work is physically hard and the money not that good. I want to get a business degree and see where that takes me. My parents are not supportive of my education. They expect me to work on the farm as much as my brother does and that doesn't leave me enough time to do my school work. My marks are sliding and I'm way behind in most of my courses. I don't know how to explain to my parents that this is what I want to do without hurting their feelings. Thanks Gregg

Hi Gregg:

Great question! Often children grow up with the parental expectation that they will follow in their parent's line of work, but this doesn't always happen and the children and parents are both left feeling unhappy and disappointed. The family farm is fast becoming a dying lifestyle and this is unfortunate because farming provided stability and bonding for the family. Pulitzer Prize winning, agricultural author Louis Bromfield wrote about farming that it's "the

only profession in which man deals constantly with all the laws of the universe and life." On the other hand, you are right it is hard work and can entail 14-hour work days, plus farm income has been constantly dwindling as huge agribusinesses take over distribution and processing of farm products. Perhaps you need to sit down and have a heart to heart discussion with your family about what you personally want to do. Include them in your plans, show them that you can have a successful life and that this is what you truly want for yourself and explain that you need to spend more time on your studies. Assure them that you will still help out on the farm when you can, but you cannot spend as much time working the farm as your brother does. If they refuse to accept your choice, you may have to move out for a while. The prospect of you moving out at this point, may cause them to realize how serious you are and that this is what you want for your future. You have to be true to yourself, while also respecting your parents' way of life. Thanks Gregg, for writing in.

Follow Barb on twitter @BarbGod

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: ONE FOREIGNER TOO MANY



Oh, Andy, isn't it terrible what happened to those poor people in Orlando!

Yup. Maybe now people will start getting serious about sending all the foreigners back where they came from!



Oh, Andy, you silly boy! Does that mean your parents have to go back to Norway? Teeheehee.



Not Norwegian foreigners! Just all the foreigners who don't appreciate pork!

But . . . Oh never mind. Listen, Andy, there's a demonstration starting at three, to support the bereaved. Can you pick me up?



Whoa! I hope you don't think I'm going to go out and publicly demonstrate in support of GAYNESS!

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.

Upcoming Events in Edmonton

AUSU Council is coming together from across Canada to meet up for an intensive, weekend long council session on **June 24-26**. The council will be hard at work with extensive strategic planning for the upcoming council term to ensure we are serving our members to the best of our ability. The council would also love to meet other AU students while in Edmonton!

Edmonton Meet & Greet

Stop by AUSU's office on **June 24** to meet other students, say hi to your council, and get some free refreshments and swag!

When: **Friday, June 24** from 4:00 – 5:00pm MDT
Where: AUSU Office, 500 Energy Square, 10109 106 Street



Edmonton In-Person Council Meeting

All members are welcome to attend the **June 26** public council meeting either **in-person** or by **teleconference**! The agenda & teleconference info will be posted [here](#) at least three days prior to the meeting. Email admin@ausu.org for more info.

When: **Sunday, June 26** @ 10:00 am MDT.
Where: Acacia Room, Coast Edmonton Plaza Hotel, 10155 105 St



AUSU In-Person Council Meeting

IMPORTANT DATES

- **June 14:** AUSU Council Meeting
- **June 15:** July degree requirements deadline
- **June 24:** Edmonton Meet & Greet
- **June 26:** In-Person AUSU Council Meeting (Edmonton)
- **June 30:** July course extension deadline
- **July 8:** Deadline to register in a course starting Aug 1
- **July 15:** August degree requirements deadline

Last Chance to take the AUSU Services Survey!

Over \$500 in prizes to be won!

Prizes for AUSU members who fill out AUSU's survey include gift cards to a store of the winners' choosing (2X \$100, 4 X \$50, 4 X \$25) and some great AUSU swag!

Please fill out our **Services Survey** [here](#) to provide AUSU with valuable feedback!

We want to know how we can best serve you, our members, and make sure you have a positive experience with AUSU and as a student at Athabasca University!

[Click Here To Take The Survey](#)

Deadline: JUNE 20, 2016

Please note, the survey will ask for your AU student ID number, but this is completely optional. In order to enter for the prize draw, you must provide your student ID number and be an active AUSU member. Your survey answers will remain completely anonymous and will not be connected to your identity. Only AUSU staff will have access to the ID numbers and members list for prize qualification purposes only. If you have any questions about this, please contact AUSU at services@ausu.org.

AUSU Services SURVEY

Over \$500 in prizes!



CLASSIFIEDS

**Experienced Caregiver Needed To Start Work Immediately In Athabasca
Monday To Friday, 5 hours Daily, 18\$/hr.
Email: chrisharper969@gmail.com"**

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

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, Deanna Roney,
Wanda Waterman, Barb Godin, Christina Frey,
Samantha Stevens

www.voicemagazine.org

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

Contact *The Voice* at voice@voicemagazine.org.

To receive a weekly email announcing each issue, subscribe [here](#). *The Voice* does not share its subscriber list.