

THE VOICE

MAGAZINE

Vol 24 Issue 31 2016-08-12

Stop me if you've Heard this One

Worried about AU's Future?

Minds We Meet

Row on over to Carrie Beckett

Dream Bigger

When You've Outgrown your Dreams

Plus:

*Nothing to Worry About!
Study vs. Pleasure in Reading
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

Minds We Meet: *Carrie Beckett* 4

Articles

Editorial: *Worry Some?* 3
Stop Me If You've Heard This One..... 9
Study vs. Pleasure: *Reading* 10
Dream Bigger 14

Columns

The Fit Student: *Nothing to Worry About* 6
The Study Dude: *Schemes, Rhythm, and Punchy Paragraphs* 11
Music Review: *Bobby Rush* 13
Mindful Bard: *April and the Extraordinary World* 16
Dear Barb: *Dog Days of Camping* 18

News and Events

Women of Interest 15
Student Sizzle..... 15
AUSU Update 20

Comic

The Non-Partisan 19

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR



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

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**Worry Some?****Karl Low**

You ever have one of those weeks where you just couldn't get your head on straight? That's been this week for me. Things have been exceptionally busy around here, and yet for all that busy-ness, very little seems to have gotten done. It's mostly been trying to deal with the small fires as they crop up.

But that's part of what makes this issue kind of eerie for me. It's like the Voice Writers have some sort of unconscious gestalt going, as this week you'll find a couple of articles about dealing with worries, whether they're about your AU degree or life in general.

Of course, it could just be that I've been binge-watching Olympics coverage, and seeing what these people are capable of, hearing their stories, is making me realize that that's an opportunity that's passed me by at this point. Not that it's one I ever seriously considered, but I'd also never considered before that it might be something that is simply impossible for me to accomplish. Whether it's because I've grown and have developed a more realistic perception of myself, or just that the athletes have gotten that much better, I'm faced with the realization that "No. I will not

ever be able to accomplish that," it's a sobering thought.

After all, we're talking the limits of human performance. I see them break Olympic Records and World Records each Olympics and it makes me wonder just how far can we go? Surely at some point there will be a limit where a human body simply cannot perform any better. And the controversy with the Russian state-sponsored doping activities seem to confirm that. Yet every Olympics, not to mention every year at different events, world records get broken. Broken by people who do it without performance enhancing substances. After all, if they didn't, the Guinness World Records company wouldn't need to create a new edition every year. It's along this lines that Christina Frey gives us her article "Dream Bigger". A departure from her usual column, but certainly worth a look.

On a completely different topic, our feature article this week is our interview with fellow student, Carrie Becket. She's one of the many people who tried traditional university, but found that it really didn't fit with the lifestyle she wanted. So when she found AU and realized that it could accommodate her desire to improve her education while still giving her the flexibility to maintain her job and other hobbies.

We also have music and film reviews, a look at how a degree changes your reading, and some other advice and entertainment to keep you busy. Enjoy the read!

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

MINDS WE MEET



Carrie Beckett is working toward her AU post-diploma Bachelor of Management degree from Calgary. Having tried the traditional university route, she's found that AU's flexible offerings fit better for her busy lifestyle. Thankfully, she was able to find some time to be interviewed by The Voice Magazine

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

I live in Calgary, AB, however I grew up in Provost AB.

Which AU program, if any, are you in?

I am in the Post-Diploma Bachelor of Management Degree, with a focus on HR/LR, hoping to be completed by mid-2017.

If you work, describe what you do.

I am a Human Resources Consultant with Elevated HR. I work with a boutique firm in Calgary, servicing all of Western Canada, assisting small to medium sized companies with their people practices and strategies.

Describe the path that led you to AU.

I attended traditional college and university after I graduated from high school. I started working after school but realized that I wasn't in the career path that I had envisioned. After some research, I found that AU worked best for me in being able to continue to work while taking a new degree. AU provided a great option since they recognized my previous schooling and provided all of the tools needed to take post-secondary from a distance.

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

When I am not working or studying, I really love to take advantage of the mountains and staying active. I enjoy mountain biking in summer and snowboarding and snowshoeing in winter. When I just want to turn off my brain, I really enjoy sewing. As well, for the past couple years, I have taught group fitness classes, including TRX and rowing. At first I started doing it because it was fun to get paid to work out but have really learned to enjoy the benefits of being able to speak in front of groups without any hesitation and learn how to pick my words concisely.

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

In my life, I look back at my Grandpa and think that he was the one that has always instilled drive and passion in me to continually improve. He was able to start a successful a business in the 1940's and overcome many

obstacles while still continuing to grow and learn. He wasn't one to pass up an opportunity but was more of an early adopter that would see how something new may help him improve.

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

Brene Brown. She has a great Ted Talk about vulnerability as well as 2 amazing books that have really resonated with me. I would love to pick her brain about her research, her discoveries and also her theories. She also seems to have a great sense of humor, so I think we'd be friends!

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

Online learning works quite well for me because of my multiple priorities outside of school. I have no problem scheduling in my assignments and readings to be able to make the classes work and love the flexibility around that. The only thing I dislike would possibly be the test-taking experience. I don't love sitting in large room with 50 other people typing furiously on their computers when I am trying to concentrate, however it is a temporary pain and much simpler then those students who don't have access to an AU location.

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

Of course! Since I have already changed my career once, I have been very careful on what I have decided to take as well as try to take education that I will be able to find value in. However, I have never wavered about the thought of education – I see it as an invaluable tool that will help me move forward with the path I choose.

What was your most memorable AU course?

I don't know if I have a most memorable course that I can think of off-hand. However, I know that the last one that I take will likely be something to remember as it has been quite a journey. I do realize now that I scheduled more of my 'favorite' courses earlier on in my degree and now am doing ones that aren't as exciting by my standards.

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

Not in any specific order, I would travel with my husband, pay off the mortgage, send my parents and in-laws on a trip, donate to some great grassroots charities in Calgary and likely buy some sort of vacation property in Kelowna – maybe even the whole winery!

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

I wouldn't say that I have given anything up to go to AU. I have taken my time to complete the degree, so there wasn't a financial burden. Just a time drain, which is expected.

What's the single best thing AU could do to improve your student experience?

The single best thing that AU could possibly do to improve the student experience would be more availability around contacting tutors. I know that they have very limited office hours, so if there would be a way of having them even more available – it would be great. Maybe that's what we could do with some of the 20 million!

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

To stop, listen and then react. I am practicing this on a daily basis, but it really helps with my communication. Instead of just adding 'my two cents' or interrupting someone, it is much more helpful to listen and provide value in my answer while respecting the person who is talking.

What do you think about e-texts?

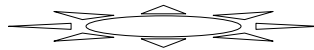
I don't love them but I think I understand why many courses are switching to this route. Personally, I would rather have the textbook to be able to highlight and write on, as the practice helps me remember. However, I have used e-texts and they still do the job.

How do you find communications with your course tutors?

Very easy – having the ability to email a tutor and know they will get back to you within a specific time is very comforting. As I mentioned, it would be great to have them available even more, however I understand the budget constraints. I think I have also lucked out, as I have had access to some great tutors who were a pleasure to deal with.

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

So Good They Can't Ignore You by Cal Newport. I am reading this to help shape a work project after the ideals that Newport says that the long-held belief that "follow your passion" is good advice. Not only is the cliché flawed pre-existing passions are rare and have little to do with how most people end up loving their work-but it can also be dangerous, leading to anxiety and chronic job hopping.



The Fit Student

Nothing to Worry About

Marie Well



Whatever you do, don't worry about anything, remarks Karl Pillemer in his book *30 Lessons for Loving: Tried and True Advice from the Wisest Americans*. This advice stems from interviews with thousands of seniors nearing the end of their lives.

As an aside, recently I saw a clip of a man who had a near death experience and claimed to have received a hug of unconditional love. As he recalled the embrace, he cried and said the experience led him to no longer fear death—further leading him to overlook all of life's worries.

Once, while thinking of a dear friend, I felt an intensity of love that surged through me so powerfully that I ached. I never felt such a raw sensation of love throughout my life. Coincidentally, as my heart energy flowed over that person, at the same time, he had his windpipe completely blocked, choking. While my heart energy intensified, he, on entirely different floor of the building, managed to clear out his lungs, finally gasping in his next breath.

What does that have to do with not worrying? Finding security in love.

If the love felt during the near death experience removed one person's worry, shouldn't we strive to give and receive unconditional love as a means to overcome worry altogether?

Pillemer's wisest people say that there are many solutions to worry. I prefer the idea of letting unconditional love remove life's woes, even if we are just givers and not quite yet receivers of love. But, you might find some of the following pieces of advice for bypassing worry equally satisfying:

Choose Happiness and Not Worry

If you don't get a good grade on an exam, choose to be happy anyway. Everyone has unhappy life events: most of us have many troublesome events. Pillemer's seniors say that once you've hit the age of 70, you've had a least one life tragedy. So, why let something as small as a test score subtract from your life's happiness?

And no matter what grade you get, you are worthwhile based solely on the fact that you exist. That's what most psychology books I've read argue, so there must be some truth or benefit to the view. Take comfort that no grade, no failure, or no loss can hamper your human worthiness.

Happiness is a choice, says Pillemer's seniors. You have the power to choose it, regardless of the negatives life tosses your way. And everyone has troubles.

Whatever happens, choose happiness.

Worry Wastes Time and Does Nothing More

When we worry, we burry ourselves in unnecessary suffering. Pillemer's seniors say, as they near life's end, that they wish they spent zero time worrying. Worrying provides no benefits whatsoever. So, when you feel yourself starting to worry, go ahead and map out your dreams and goals or write down interests you hope to soon explore. Focusing on your goals and not your worries helps you stay productive.

Worry takes away and never adds: so let the worry go or take positive action, says Pillemer's seniors.

Don't waste time with worries.

Don't Worry about the Past or Future

Stay in the moment. Don't let fear, whether of the past or the future, govern your life.

Recently, I got shortlisted for a college teaching position, and I received word that a position would be mine if the next two interviewees weren't shining stars. After that news, for the first half of the week, I felt the rush of exhilaration. But, for the following half week, I felt fearful. Would I be able to control the classroom? Would I, being inexperienced, have adequate time to prepare? Would I have enough money to afford the supplies I need?

But I tried not to worry about the past or the future, and instead tried staying fixed on the present moment. I asked myself, what can I do this instant to make this opportunity have a happy ending? So, I read up on how to do a Ted Talk, on how the pros create comedy, and, of course, on how to teach: all topics that can brighten up the classroom experience.

Stop fearing your past or future; stay in the present, say the seniors in Pillemer's book.

Don't worry about Uncertainty or Certainty

Whether things are certain or uncertain, don't worry about them. If things are certain, you can prepare and plan. If things are uncertain, you can let yourself flow with the natural forces of life. Whatever you do, don't worry. Pillemer's seniors say that worrying blocks you from acting sensibly.

I sometimes worry about having an anxiety attack. That's because I might risk an anxiety attack if I were to take on too much coursework while working multiple jobs. But instead of worrying about anxiety, I took action. I overcame the attacks through reading books on cognitive behavioral therapy. In other words, I learned how to use self-talk to stop worrying.

If something seems certain, plan around it. If something is uncertain, don't waste time and energy fretting.

Don't Worry about What You Can't Change

Most everyone had awful things happen to them at some point in their lives. But, hey, we can't change it now, can we? For mistake we've made in the past, books on resilience say forgive yourself and move on.

And try not to fashion yourself a "victim." Instead, yank out your journal and write down your hopes and dreams. Or better yet, do something that brings you closer to your highest aspirations. Cut out a picture of your dream career. Search for a personally meaningful quote to insert at the start of your next essay. Post the words "PhD" on your bathroom mirror. If you can't change the negative, do something productive to distract yourself instead.

So, if you can't do anything about it, don't worry about it.

Don't Worry; Just Accept

What do you do if you fail an exam? Say to yourself, "this too will pass" or "let it be," advises Pillemer's seniors. Besides, a public finding says that people who win the lottery and people who have severe loss or disability eventually merge to similar levels of happiness anyway. So, just accept your loss or failure.

But try to learn from the issue. In other words, consider the failure as practice for the next exam. Learn memory tricks. Adjust your schedule to fit in more time for studying. Seek out additional books that shed light on your problem areas.

In other words, accept things but make positive adjustments for future success, says Pillemer's seniors.

Don't Sweat the Small Stuff; Enjoy the Small Stuff

If you find yourself facing horrible life events, try not to worry. Instead, focus on the little pleasures that surround us every day. Focus on the bird chirping, on the fact that you are alive, on your ability to continue growing as a fellow human being.

Enjoy the small stuff, says Pillemer's seniors.

Your Daily Top 10 List

And Pillemer's seniors say, write down your top ten lists. Make a top ten list of things to accomplish each day. Even make a top ten list of your hopes and dreams.

And don't worry if you feel you don't have any hopes and dreams. The more you try to write them down, like watered flowers, the more they grow.

Weed out your worries.

Stop Me if You've Heard this One

Barbara Lehtiniemi



Like the predictable man-walks-into-a-bar joke, the "news" that AU might be closing seems to reappear with tiresome frequency. And like the reaction to a tired old joke, students who have heard it before tend to sigh and roll their eyes.

Each time the not-so-new news breaks about threats to AU, new students break into a social media sweat, worried lest the work they've put in to credits and programs come to naught. Experienced students helpfully post articles from last year's crisis, or the year before's.

Not to downplay the issue: The financial challenges facing AU are real and are cause for concern. Students have a right to know and—I believe—an obligation to keep informed. I recommend starting with Carla Knipe's July 29, 2016 article The AU Budget Beyond the Numbers, in *The Voice Magazine*. For the official word, check the AU News page and, if you like your information to be a bit more random, perform a web search on "Athabasca University" coupled with your pick of "insolvency", "budget", or "rumour".

I remain rather meh on the issue. I get that it's a serious topic and I'd like to see the problem resolved, if only to prevent these annual death rattles which distract me from my studies.

Perhaps I should be more worried but, then, there is so much to be worried about these days. I don't consider myself a chronic worrier, yet when I begin a mental list of all the things I worry about, it's a bit overwhelming. Perhaps I should be worried that I worry too much.

I heard a piece of wisdom years ago that there was "no sense in worry, because five out six things you worry about will never happen." Is that supposed to be comforting? I'd really be worried if I thought that one-sixth of the things I worry about will really happen!

So, am I worried about the perennial worries about AU? Yes, of course. But I've only got so much capacity for worry and I try to focus on the situations I can do something about. This is one situation that I'm reasonably confident is going to work out okay, whether I worry about it or not. Even if I can't fully rely on the assurances of presidents and politicians, I can rely on my own research that shows that, while a handful of Canadian universities have merged over the years, only one Canadian university has ever closed.

So I'm sticking with the program and my studies. I'm sticking with AU. And next year, when I hear the sky is falling *again*, I'll roll my eyes and remind myself to Keep Calm and Study On. Again.

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

Study vs. Pleasure Reading

Deanna Roney



I have always loved reading, it seemed natural then to study literature in university. Some of these works were difficult and, with time constraints, seemed nearly impossible to get through. For me, this was *Vanity Fair* by W.M. Thackeray. It's long and complex, and, in my strain to get through it, I missed a few key aspects of the novel. Perhaps if I had picked up on these it would have been easier to digest. Reading for university is far different than reading for pleasure. Throughout the program I tried to inject some pleasure reading along the way. Granted some(most) of the books assigned were a pleasure to read, but

reading them was not as relaxing—there were things within the book, within each chapter or each scene, that were vital to understand for the course.

Reading in this way can be enjoyable, though not entirely relaxing. You must always be vividly aware of what is happening and why it is happening, and commit these to memory. Because somewhere in the thousand-page work is a quote which will be needed. A scene which will be tested, or a character which must be remembered. Reading these assigned works gave me new favourites (*Tess of the d'Urbervilles* by Thomas Hardy), new genres, time periods, and a more rounded reading experience. Through the works of the nineteenth century to the post-colonial and children's literature I gathered an understanding for the importance of the written word. I gained an appreciation for the power of a well written novel and the changes it could inspire. It is somehow easier to face a dark reality when it is presented in the form of fiction. Fiction has the ability to rip out your heart and show you it's darkest sides without forcing you to be defensive. You can merely observe what is being shown to you and allow it to affect the way you see the world: a work of fiction has the ability to change the way you see the world and yourself in relation to it.

Taking literature courses throughout my program changed the way I see the world, the way I write about the world, and the goals I have for that writing. I have come to understand the importance of a story, a well placed word, and in re-reading works. There is no reading experience quite like reading for a paper, exam, or discussion. I read many great works throughout university but one that did not make the roster sat on my 'to be read' pile for a long time. Having picked my way through other books at an alarming rate, I finally decided to tackle the mountain that is Leo Tolstoy's *Anna Karenina*. I have found myself grateful for the chance to read it, and perhaps more grateful that I am not writing a paper on it. There are many nuances within the work and statements on society that would be excellent fodder for any paper, but finding the quotes or picking a single topic would prove challenging. To peel away the rest of the novel and focus only on a single topic would prove to be nearly impossible.

Reading *Anna Karenina* in this way I have found myself enjoying the process, seeing the ideas that would translate into papers, but allow myself to only touch the surface of some. This book is truly one worth re-reading

as I think that every time you pick the book up a new story will emerge. I enjoy that I can read this one until my eyes grow weary and set it down. I do not have a deadline to finish it, nor the need to remember every detail; I even have the ability to skip scenes without much consequence should I desire.

Reading for pleasure and reading for study are different processes, yet one benefits the other. Reading for study trains us how to see between the lines to pick out the important aspects of a novel and analyze them until there seems to be nothing left; reading for pleasure you can see these things but are granted the ability to only touch their surface, not to delve into their depths unless you so desire. Neither style of reading is better than the other per-se, but one, I find, is entirely more relaxing.

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



Study Tips from a Semi-Anonymous Friend

Schemes, Rhythm, and Punchy Paragraphs

There is nothing more that The Study Dude wants for you than to make musical essays.

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 *Mastering the Craft of Writing: How to Write With Clarity, Emphasis, & Style* by Stephen Wilbers. He teaches you how to craft your paragraphs,

add a skip to your writing—and unleash your inner schemes.

Perfect Paragraphs

I ask you, do you not shed tears when ending your paragraphs with a dry summary? Well, you should. Summary endings bore us all. Don't rehash; make a splash.

Journalists love to make a splash. In journalism, paragraphs don't work like they do in universities. With journalism, your paragraphs are short and stripped of wordiness. In journalism, unlike universities, you don't end your paragraph with a summary; you end with a bang.

That's why people pay to read magazine articles. And that's why your professor gets paid big bucks to skim, I mean read, your essays.

So, how can you enliven your paragraphs so that professors will beg for more? End with a punch, says Wilbers.

Wilbers advises you to end your paragraphs with the following tricks. And, what's more, he tells all on how to write punchy paragraphs:

- For your paragraphs, academic writing tends to demand an introductory sentence, a development, and a concluding sentence. Narrative writing (such as fiction writing) uses paragraphs to mark changes in dialogue and scenes.
- Use shorter paragraphs for laid-back writing; longer ones for academic writing.
- In any kind of writing, following a long paragraph with a one-sentence paragraph can spice up your writing. In creative writing, the one-sentence paragraph could contain a fragment. But, for academic writing, you want to avoid fragments (or at least use them sparingly). You could use a lively device such as a rhetorical question for the one-sentence paragraph. And why wouldn't you?
- Make the last sentence of a paragraph full of life or humor or imagery. End your paragraphs "with a quip, a colorful quote, a vivid image, a thought-proving analogy, or an imaginative simile or metaphor" (p. 210)—like a final scene of a daydream.
- Put your biggest ideas in the first and last sentences.
- Put a shorter paragraph after a longer one to add variety.

Rhythm

Do you like to write poetry? Well, if you do, I bet you've got rhythm. And add that and a touch of schemes to your writing and you've got what it takes to ignite any reader's adrenaline.

What's a scheme? Schemes play with the structures of your sentence so that your sentence structure sounds like music. But no-one likes a constant schemer, so you'll sometimes want to tug apart the poetic feel with a break in flow, says Wilbers.

Many devices exist for creating a poetic structure in your sentences. Wilbers reveals:

- If you make a list, and you begin it with a sentence fragment, every item in the list should begin with a sentence fragment. If you start with an -ing word (a gerund), every item in the list should begin with a gerund. If you start with a noun, every item in the list should start with a noun. And so on.
- Schemes are plays on sentence structures; tropes are figures of speeches such as metaphors and similes. Schemes include things such as chiasmus, anaphora, epistrophe, anadiplosis, and isoclon—all potentially names of Star Trek characters.
- A balanced sentence repeats similar parts: *free is the fox; fixed is the hunter*.
- An antithetical sentence is a balanced sentence with a negative in one of the repeated parts: *Not that life is short, but that enduring it seems forever*.
- A loose sentence has a main clause with parallel items in a series following it: *Life is contentious, sometimes ornery, often whiny, always unsentimental*. In this case, *Life is contentious* is the main clause and the remainder of the sentence consists of a series of items.
- A periodic sentence is like a loose sentence, but with the main clause at the end: *Sometimes ornery, often whiny, always unsentimental, life is contentious*. Unlike a loose sentence, periodic sentences create suspense and drama.
- Without subordinate sentences every now and then, your writing will suck.

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

References

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Music Review

Bobby Rush

Samantha Stevens



Musician: Bobby Rush

Album: *Porcupine Meat*

Famous blues musician, Bobby Rush, is back and badder than ever, 'proving that age is just a number. This 82-year-old blues rocker is getting ready to release his latest album, *Porcupine Meat*, due out September 16th, and has already booked an extensive live tour throughout the southern United States this fall. It is obvious that Bobby is not planning on slowing down any time soon.

This is good news for longtime Bobby Rush fans, and blues fans in general, because with an extensive 60-plus year musical career behind him, Bobby is clearly the master of contemporary blues. Bobby earned his first gold record in 1971, has been nominated for 3 Grammy awards, and has 41 nominations and 10 awards from the Blues Foundation. In 2015, Bobby

was inducted into the Official Rhythm & Blues Music Hall of Fame in Clarksdale, Mississippi. Bobby has also played live concerts all over the world, including Japan and Beirut, and he even became the first blues artist to play on the Great Wall of China (<http://bobbyrushbluesman.com/the-bobby-rush-bio/>).

Having worked with musical legends such as Muddy Waters, Jimmy Reed, and Etta James, Bobby Rush has created his own unique style of blues. For those who have never heard his music before, Bobby's sound is primarily composed of blues elements. However, there are also frequent inclusions of funk and soul beats and rhythms, and it is this feature that sets his music apart from other contemporary blues musicians.

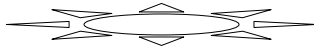
Porcupine Meat is a fun romp with its upbeat tempos and brilliant lyrical compositions. The majority of the themes on the album are familiar and lighthearted, like "Funk O' De Funk" and "Think Your Dress Is Too Short". But "Got Me Accused" is much more serious with its focus on racial injustice and is inspired by real life events experienced by Bobby.

The album was produced in New Orleans, and this was the first time that Bobby recorded an album in his home state. Produced by two-time Grammy winner Scott Billington, and released with the famed Rounder Records, the album was captured live in studio. Only real instruments and no synthesizers were used in the creation of the album, which is different from most of his other recent releases that were marked heavily by the use of synthesizers. The only post-production editing that was necessary for *Porcupine Meat* was to reduce some of the jams from their ten-minute playtime (<http://bobbyrushbluesman.com/the-bobby-rush-bio/>). The album also includes guest collaborations with guitar masters Vasti Jackson, Dave Alvin, Keb' Mo', and Joe Bonamassa.

Blues fans, new and old, need to check out *Porcupine Meat*, if only to marvel at Bobby's vibrant energy and musical genius. And to help put his impressive career in perspective, consider that Bobby's first single was released on a 45, the smaller vinyl records that were used for singles, generally one track per side. Now

considering that his latest album, *Porcupine Meat*, will be available in digital format, such as iTunes, it proves that Bobby Rush's music is timeless. For more information about this amazing man, his past music, and upcoming tour, be sure to check out his [website](#).

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



Dream Bigger

Christina M. Frey



"Believe in yourself, and you can do anything," we say.

"She thought she could, so she did."

It's good to dream—essential, really. Without dreams, we get stuck. Without dreams, we can't move forward.

But sometimes the opposite is true. As important as it is to dream, it's equally important to realize when an unrealistic dream is holding us back. I'm reminded of this as I watch the women's Olympic gymnastics finals.

As a kid, I was obsessed with gymnastics. I read it, watched it, practiced it in the living room. So my

parents got me lessons at a competitive gym, and I was determined to make my Olympic debut a decade later. For years I tried and tried and tried and believed in myself and my dream. I was *going* to do this.

The problem was, I had no natural talent.

No, really. On a scale of one to ten, I was a negative four. Three years of lessons and all the trying and believing in the world didn't change that—couldn't change that.

That's when I started realizing that maybe it wasn't the right dream for me anymore.

So I joined the track team at school and found out that I was good at it. To an eleven-year-old, being able to "beat the boys" at the 60-metre dash was the pinnacle of the year, better even than the medals later. I stopped running in high school but took it up again two years ago recreationally, and now I'm on one of those ridiculous earn-a-medal-in-every-state kicks (3 down, 47 to go, but I've got my sights set on getting #4 in October). Apparently running was a better fit than gymnastics at that point—and it still is.

As a gymnast, I was stagnating and—if I'm being honest—not really enjoying myself. My dream had long stopped empowering me. Instead it was holding me hostage, tying me down to something that I no longer truly wanted. When I quit gymnastics, I wasn't really giving up—more like letting go. Letting go to free myself up to dream more fully again.

As an adult, it's just as easy to get stuck on a dream. Maybe we've got a goal that fit with our desires of one, five, ten years ago but that no longer matches what we truly want. Maybe circumstances have changed our perspective, and we're looking at a different path than the one we originally thought was ideal.

We can keep dreaming big—but that doesn't mean we can't dream bigger. It's okay to evaluate our dreams and modify them if our interests and needs have changed, and even jettison them if they're no longer the right fit. It's only when we give ourselves the freedom to turn our old dreams into new, better ones that we can dream fully once again.

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

Women Of Interest

Grace MacInnis was born July 25, 1905, and passed away July 10, 1991. She was a Canadian politician and feminist, and the first woman elected to the British Columbia House of Commons. MacInnis was the daughter of J.S. Woodsworth, who was the leader of the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation, and she was the wife of MP Angus MacInnis. Grace and Angus MacInnis took an interest in many issues including abortion rights, women's equality, family planning and affordable housing. She was a founding member of the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation and eventually the New Democratic Party. She served as Canada's representative at many international conferences. Grace MacInnis was honored for her lifetime contributions and, in 1974, was made an Officer of the Order of Canada. In 1990 she was presented with the Order of British Columbia.

Additional information about Grace MacInnis may be found at the following websites:

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

<http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/grace-winona-macinnis/>

<https://www.leg.bc.ca/content/legacy/web/media/docs/learningresources/displays/labcwomenhistorymonth/labc-womens-history-month-display-panels-5-6.pdf>

compiled by Barb Godin

Student Sizzle AU's Hot Social Media Topics

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

AthaU Facebook Group

Bob Barnetson posts a warning about email to tutors being misdirected to junk folders after Microsoft made some changes to Office 365, which AU licenses for tutors and staff. The warning about this was sent through email and so also ended up in the junk folder. Other posts include, questions about Psych 304, timeframes for assignment marking, Soci 321, and AUSU needing a CRO for their upcoming by-election.

Twitter

@AthabascaU tweets: "Today's Banner's upgrade will deliver more streamlined services to #AthaU students <http://goo.gl/twSfnp>"

@AthabascaUSU (AUSU) tweets: "AUSU is hiring a Chief Returning Officer (CRO) for an upcoming By-Election! Deadline: Aug 17 <http://bit.ly/2aMgDyJ>"

@AU_Press tweets: "Grab a copy of Prairie Books Now to read about how local initiatives have global impact. Feature by @livingsanctuary" and "ICYMI: Why we burst with pride during the [#olympics](#)--a look at national identity and sport <http://aupress.ca/index.php/books/120244> ...



The Mindful Bard

April and the Extraordinary World

Wanda Waterman



Lizard Brain Versus Enlightened Mind in a Sooty Dystopian France

Film: *April and the Extraordinary World*

Directors: Christian Desmares and Franck Ekinci

Writers: Franck Ekinci, Benjamin Legrand, and Jacques Tardi

"According to Gandhi, the seven sins are wealth without works, pleasure without conscience, knowledge without character, commerce without morality, science without humanity, worship without sacrifice, and politics without principle."

- Jimmy Carter

The plot of *April and the Extraordinary World* is based on the premise that all the great scientists of the early twentieth century simply disappear, essentially freezing 1931 France into a kind of steampunk wasteland so ravenous for wood and coal that it's ready to go to war with Canada to get more. Any successful attempts to "discover" electricity are quickly stamped out, and no new science books have appeared since the last century.

In many steampunk books and films the age of steam is lauded as an alluring alternative to the environmental and technological chaos we're facing now, but this film doesn't guild that lily; this particular steam-driven world is cumbersome, dirty, and treeless. (When later our eyes encounter a real jungle, the sight of it, contrasted with the decrepit, barren urban landscape we've been seeing, is deliciously refreshing. The aesthetic contrast of the two worlds makes the visual extravaganzas of most science fiction films look gauche.)

In this world it's a crime not to follow the empire's military initiatives, and the police pursue the errant with mad zeal. A dilemma thus emerges for the scientist: Be true to the ruling powers and stay safe, or be true to professional obligations and risk one's life.

April Franklin is the daughter of two scientists who've disappeared. She's also lost track of her grandfather, Prosper, another scientist. The family had been working on a serum that would restore life and health and render the taker invincible. It was set to revolutionise life as they knew it, but before they could test it properly the secret police arrived and there followed a long period of separation, during which the powers that be did their darndest to get their hands on that serum.

April raises herself in hiding, inside the head of a great metal statue of Napoleon III, his boot resting on a globe (suggesting George Orwell's prophecy: "If you want a vision of the future, imagine a boot stamping on a human face— forever"). Keeping her company is Darwin, a cat gifted with speech by means of one of her parents' lab experiments (they'd been assigned the job of creating an army of invincible ape soldiers).

April's *raison d'être* is to find her family, perfect the serum herself, evade the empire's control, and remain true to her integrity. It's quite the trip.

Muted olive and tan colours added to black and white are a visual feast, granting this seedy-looking world its own steampunk glamour. The action scenes are arresting— things happen that are choreographed better than ballet, the characters accomplishing well-timed acrobatic feats conventional cinematography can only imagine.

There are so many clever little visual touches, such as a gramophone with a tiny boiler beside it to provide power, the home of April's love interest Julius (the balcony of an old opera house converted into a boiler room), April and Darwin's home in the head of Napoleon, their shadows seen from outside darting back and forth behind his eyes, and April entering a burned out Normandy, via the Seine, in an old house converted into a submarine with legs.

April Franklin is a wonderful heroine, unglamorous in appearance but with an amazing vitality, a mind like a steel trap, a healthy attachment to others, and a firm sense of self.

Her ultimate opponents are Rodrigue and Chimène, giant lizards swathed in machinery. They're married and have oodles of lizard babies, similarly metal-swathed, to help along their imperialist agenda. They're highly intelligent, but only the gentle Chimène appears to have evolved past the primitive thinking of the lizard brain; Rodrigue, articulate and tyrannical, has no other goal than total power over all there is.

(Rodrigue and Chimène happen to be the names of the main characters in the French tragi-comedy, *El Cid* by Pierre Corneille— a kind of Romeo and Juliet story but in which both get to survive the odds. Spoiler alert: these lizards aren't so lucky.)

In essence this film is the story of a conflict between instinctual, impulsive lizard brains and the self-actualised human brains manifested in the persons of April Franklin and her entourage.

The metaphor of the iron-clad lizards is a warning: the techno-lizard brain, scientifically advanced but remaining instinctual, ravenous, egocentric, and void of compassion and imagination, is where we're headed right now if we don't watch out.

April and the Extraordinary World manifests seven of the Mindful Bard's criteria for films well worth seeing.

- It's authentic, original, and delightful.
- It poses and admirably responds to questions that have a direct bearing on my view of existence.
- It stimulates my mind.
- It harmoniously unites art with social conscience.
- It inspires an awareness of the sanctity of creation.
- It renews my enthusiasm for positive social action.
- It makes me appreciate that life is a complex and rare phenomena, making living a unique opportunity.

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



Dear
Barb

Barbara Godin

Dog Days of Camping

Dear Barb:

I have a question, my husband and I have two dogs and we walk them regularly and always pick up after them. Recently a new person has moved into the neighborhood and she has a large dog that she walks frequently. The problem is I have never seen her pick up after her dog. One day the dog was pooping and I was across the street walking my dog and I kind of slowed down to watch if she was going to pick up after her dog. She kept standing in front of her dog waiting for me to leave, but I kept looking back until I saw her walk away without picking up her dog's poop. I don't want to have problems with my neighbors, but I don't think it is right that she let her dog poop all over everyone's lawn. What is the best way to handle a situation like this? Mary.

Hi Mary:

Thanks for your question. I guess not everybody got the memo to clean up after their dogs! It is very inconsiderate and annoying that people still do this after all the signs that are posted about picking up after your dog. It's hard to know what to do, because you don't want to have problems with your neighbors, but you know this is not right. My suggestion would be that the next time you see her; perhaps you can approach her in a friendly manner and ask her if she needs a poop bag. Maybe you can carry on by saying, how annoying it is when you forget your bag and have to go back and pick up the poop. She may take the hint, or she may tell you where to go. I assume if she continues this bad habit she will make a lot of enemies in the neighborhood and will eventually be forced to pick up after her dog or walk it somewhere else, where she will most likely run into the same

situation. Hope this was helpful.

Dear Barb:

Hi, my husband and I love camping and go all the time. We have some friends who bought tents and camping gear and started camping this year. We helped them a lot with camping information and where are the best campgrounds. They always ask us where we are camping and our site number and they book a site near us, which is great. The problem is they don't spend any time with us. We assume they are asking us where we are going because they want to camp with us, but they don't seem to. My question is why would they ask us and book a site near us and then not spend any time with us? Thanks, Kara.

Hey Kara:

Interesting scenario! Some people are just like this. They go on vacation with someone and want to go off by themselves. Maybe they just want to do different things than you and your husband do but yet like to know that you guys are close by. If you want to have dinner with them or go for a hike, you could just ask them. If they say no, just accept that and do what you would normally do when you camp without them. It's simple solution. Thanks for writing.

Follow on 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: IN THE 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.

AUSU 2016 By-Election

AUSU will be holding a by-election in September 2016 to fill two vacant council seats.

The by-election timeline is tentatively set as follows:

Call for Nominations	August 31 – September 14
Nominees Announced	September 19
Campaign Period	September 19 to October 3
Election	September 30 to October 3

AUSU will notify all members when the call for nominations is open. Stay tuned!

The next General Election is set to occur in March 2018, so the two new councillors will serve approximately 18 months (from October 2016 to March 2018).

If you are interested in helping to shape your AU experience, consider becoming an AUSU councillor!

If you have any questions, contact ausu@ausu.org.



IMPORTANT DATES

- **Aug 14:** Deadline to apply for CRO position
- **Aug 15:** Sept degree requirements deadline
- **Aug 31:** Call for Nominations for 2016 By-Election
- **Aug 31:** September course extension deadline
- **Sept 6:** [AU Open House Webinar](#)
- **Sept 10:** Deadline to register in a course starting Oct 1
- **Sept 13:** AUSU Council Meeting (5:30pm MT)

AU Budget Update

AUSU just posted a new Executive blog with some insights about the AU budget situation.

Check it out online [here](#).



Now Hiring - Chief Returning Officer

The Athabasca University Students' Union is currently accepting applications to fill the role of Chief Returning Officer (CRO) for the upcoming 2016 By-Election.

DEADLINE TO APPLY: August 17, 2016.

The CRO, working with AUSU staff, is responsible for monitoring all aspects of the election process.

The CRO position can be performed from any location, but requires telephone, email, and internet capability. Proficiency in Word and Excel is required. The CRO must be available to respond to inquiries within 1 business day (*in some cases during the AUSU office hours of 8:30am-4:30pm MDT*). Duties will run from the end of August to mid-October, following the by-election timelines.

The successful candidate will receive a \$1000 honorarium on successful completion of the role.

For more information and instructions on how to apply, visit our website [here](#).

CLASSIFIEDS

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

THE VOICE

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