

THE VOICE

MAGAZINE

Vol 24 Issue 44 2016-11-18

Minds We Meet!

Meet Fellow Student, Megan Camp!

Initiation to E-Texts

One Writer's First Experience

Finding Community

Connecting from a Distance

*Plus:
Council Connection
Tell off a Prof
and much more!*



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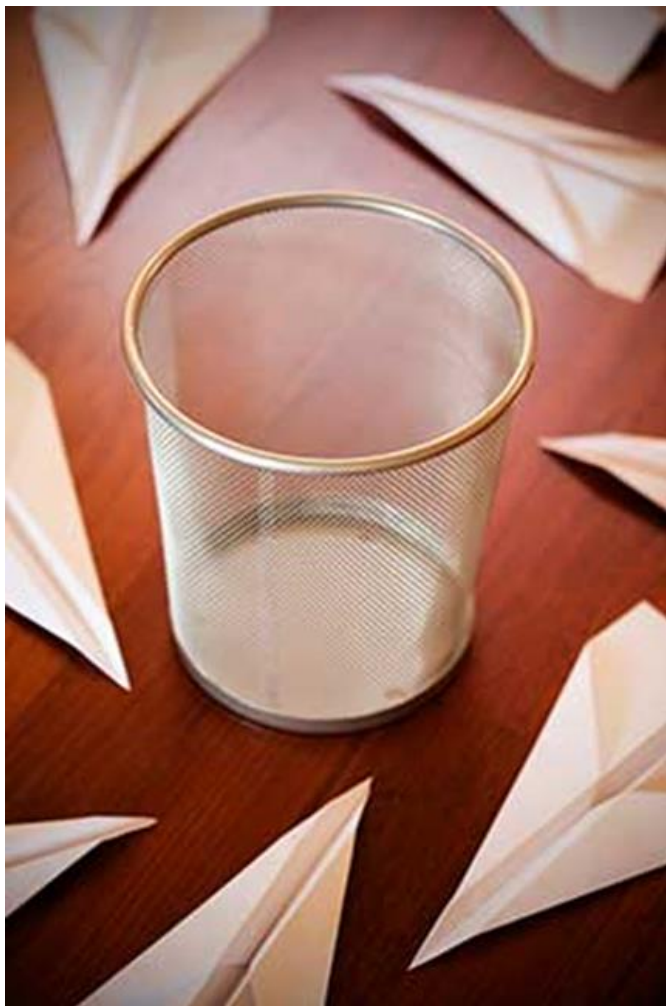
LETTERS TO THE EDITOR



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**A Bad Chicken Joke****Karl Low**

*Why'd the MLA cross the floor?
To get to the other side.*

The latest news in Alberta politics, (aside from the [Alberta Tuition Review](#), which, if you haven't filled out already, you really should—even if you're not from Alberta) is that a member of the Progressive Conservative Party in Alberta, Sandra Jansen, has swapped sides to the NDP.

At first glance, this would seem like nothing more than standard political manoeuvring for a better position. But looking more carefully suggests something different.

The first thing to realize is that the PC Alberta party, the one she left, is first in polling intentions and the NDP, the party she joined, is in third. Yes, the NDP is currently in government, but given the state of the Alberta economy, that's not something that plays in their favour for the next election at the moment.

The second thing to realize is that Alberta has a track record when it comes to those who cross the floor, and

it's not a good one for the floor-crossers. Shortly before the NDP was elected, nine sitting members of the Wild Rose party crossed over to the PC party. Not one of those people retained their seat.

With these two things in mind, Ms. Jansen's shift does not seem to be the actions of one who is simply seeking additional power. So why did she do it?

It wasn't very long ago that Ms. Jansen was running for the leadership of the PC party. She, and one other female candidate in the running, withdrew from that race citing that they'd suffered significant harassment during a leadership convention for "protecting women's rights" and "supporting children's rights to a safe school environment." Since then, the party has not indicated that there has been any sort of action against those who did this, and it seems Ms. Jansen decided that meant the party was no longer a good fit for her.

But why the NDP? Given their current popularity, and the history of what happens to floor-crossers in Alberta, it seems like a potentially career ending move. Much safer would have been to simply resign from the PC Party and sit as an independent until the next election.

While I can't claim to know her reasoning, it strikes me that the most reasonable explanation is that she decided that if leaving the PC party would endanger her political career, rather than have her last political years be ineffective, joining the currently governing NDP could give a significant voice for her constituents by sitting her at the table crafting the policies that the majority NDP will be passing. So maybe sometimes when MLA's cross the floor, it really is just to get to the other side.

Meanwhile, this week in The Voice Magazine, our feature article is a conversation with a student who first started her post-secondary career in 2005, but has been unable to finish because of the demands of life and being a single mother. Read how she's used AU to finally reach the end of her journey to a degree, and how she balances it all out.

Also this week, we have a report on the last council meeting where AUSU Council decided that they'd bitten off more than they could reasonably chew, even though the menu was prepared with the help of fellow students through the services survey. You can read Bonita Arbeau's report on the meeting, including the seven goals that were removed, and see who the councillor was who voted against the rest of the group on the removal.

We're also bringing back the e-text debate this week as writer Barbara Lehtiniemi dives into her first e-text course. She's been avoiding them until now, taking courses that haven't been converted, but there's only so long a person can do that before they run out of courses. Read her experience with her first course and find out if she's a convert yet.

And we have an article on the importance of finding a community of like-minded people while you study at AU. But this doesn't have to be a community of students, it could also be those people who have the same goals or dreams as you. Deanna Roney gives some tips on how to find these communities, and how they can help you with your motivation for your degree, even if they're not AU related.

If that's not enough, we have the Creative Spark, giving you information on how tips for making movies can be used to make your essays stand out from the crowd, and The Study Dude takes on a topic that we all need to handle sooner or later, the art of making a complaint. After all, the best complaints are those that make something happen to fix the situation, but too many of them are just noise. Find out how to make your concerns stand out from the noise.

Plus, of course, we have news, reviews, advice, the latest page of the Doppelgänger Cure, our scholarship of the week, and what AU related events are coming up that you might want to get in on.

Enjoy the read!



MINDS WE MEET



Megan Camp is in her final semester of Bachelors of Arts in Psychology at AU, with a minor in Anthropology, which she juggles with being a single mom. Recently she took some time out of her busy schedule to talk to The Voice Magazine.

So, what's your story? How'd you come to AU?

I did the brick and mortar university thing when I first attended post-secondary in 2005, but consistently had to put my education on the back-burner to work more and make ends meet. When my son was born in 2010, I decided that enough was enough and enrolled in Athabasca University during my maternity leave to finish my degree. I had to put Athabasca on hold as well a couple of times over the last six years to focus on other things in my life, but I always had the intention of coming back and finishing this degree.

As a single mom, the traditional university setting just wouldn't have worked for me, so Athabasca really was an incredible opportunity for me to finish my goals while still being able to work and provide for my son. We currently live in Coquitlam, BC, but I was born and raised in small towns on Vancouver Island. I currently work for an audio engineering company nearby, and, even though my current occupation is not in the realm of my studies, I have always been a huge music lover, so working for this company has been pretty awesome.

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

When I'm not studying I like to hang out with my son, go for walks, read a book, listen to music. On a Saturday morning you can often find me sitting on the living room floor with my 6-year-old, coffee in hand, massive Lego structures abound, with whatever cartoon is the flavor of the week blaring in the background.

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

Howard Carter. As a child I was completely enamored by ancient Egypt. I would read every book I could find on the subject. This was the beginning of my fascination with the world of anthropology and other ancient and modern cultures. While other kids were playing street hockey and tag; I was digging holes in my backyard, convinced that I was going to unravel the next great world mystery underneath the garden shed. Howard Carter is the first archaeologist I can remember learning about and I think having lunch with him would satisfy my inner child; I bet he has some cool stories.

What would the meal be?

Oh! Seafood Crepes, most definitely! One of my first jobs was as a hostess in this small, French-inspired bistro in my hometown. On slower nights, when the tips weren't that great, they would tip me out with a meal of Seafood Crepes. They were honestly the most amazing things I have ever eaten. In my 30 years on this planet, I have never again found a place that does seafood crepes as well as this place did. And I am always looking!

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

That's a toss-up. If we are talking pre-mom me's desire to learn, then I would have to say my high school counsellor. I didn't have the easiest time in school and being able to afford post-secondary was pretty much a pipe-dream. But she saw something in me and encouraged me to apply myself to my schooling. In the end, she helped me apply for and receive enough bursaries and scholarships to enroll in and attend my first year of University. I remember her crying when I graduated. She passed away a few years ago now, but she had a significant impact on my determination to finish my degree and even my field of study. Ideally, I would like to become a school counsellor as well as having my own clinical counselling practice.

Currently though, the biggest influence for my continued education is my son. He was the reason I went back to school in the first place. I wanted to be able to show him (and myself) that anything is possible if you set your mind to it and to not sell yourself short because life gets in the way. When I feel completely overwhelmed and like I am a total failure as a mom and/or a student, he's the one who reminds me to not give up. He is definitely my source of strength through the rocky times.

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

For me, online learning has been a life saver. It would have been really difficult for me to attend a brick and mortar university setting, so having the ability to complete my degree online really put the power back in my hands when it comes to my own education. It's like the universe saying, "here's the academic setting, you can either do something with it or not do something with it, but the choice is yours". It took a way a lot of barriers for me and put the onus on myself for my own academic achievement. I hate being told I can't do something. I'm like the little girl on the playground being told that she isn't strong enough to do the monkey bars, "oh yeah? Watch me!" I can be pretty stubborn. Online learning has been amazing for me and I personally don't have a lot of dislikes. But there are times for sure when I miss those heated classroom debates that you can find in traditional university settings. Those lectures stick in mind a lot and I often wonder if I am retaining the same amount of information doing online learning as I would be from a more traditional setting.

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

Oh, absolutely, many times! I have been working on my four-year Bachelor's Degree for a decade now! There have been many times where I have made the choice to put my education on the back burner. There have been many times when I thought this wasn't for me, that I couldn't afford it, when I asked myself if it was really going to get me anywhere in life. But at the end of the day, this was something that I wanted for myself and I always found myself picking it back up again. It's okay to take the time to ask yourself those questions. I think so many people attend post-secondary because they feel it is the thing to do, or because it is important to the family and they really haven't taken the time to ask themselves is this really what I want? Do I know what I want to get out of this? Take the time to ask yourself those hard questions. Be firm in your choices and do what is best for you and your life and dreams. And if it takes you a decade to answer those questions? So be it! It's better than spending four decades doing something that is not compatible with your actual life dreams.

What was your most memorable AU course?

Last semester I enrolled in Anthropology 402: Ethnographic Research Methods. As part of our final grade, we were tasked with completing a research project in which we employed ethnographic research methods. I chose to do my report on the impact that cooperative housing developments have on a sense of community within urban centers. Because I live in cooperative housing myself and because the lower mainland is facing such a housing crisis at the moment, I thought the topic would be very interesting. I was blown away but what I learned and the whole experience of really immersing myself in ethnographic research! I was able to host interviews with members of the housing cooperative and really get to the bottom of why a sense of community is so important and what city planners, builders and government can do to help facilitate these community ideals. It was a fascinating opportunity within the course!

What is most valuable thing in life to you?

The freedom of choice. We are so lucky to have it. Sometimes we get so wrapped up in a deterministic future that we forget that somewhere, there is always a choice. You can always break something down to a choice. Sure, sometimes life throws you some pretty heavy curve balls at you and you feel like you really don't have any options, but somewhere in this total catastrophic event there is one. Are you going to let it stop you? Or are you going to let it empower you? Every time I feel like the universe is just completely set to mess around with me, I ask myself, what is my choice here? There is usually a more important lesson to be learned than what is just under the surface. No matter what life throws at you (and trust me, it will test you!), always try and determine what your choice is. It keeps the future in your hands.

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

Time. The ability to spend an entire day with my nose in a good book and not feel like there is a million other things that I could be doing that would be way more constructive. But in the end I know that it is worth it and those days with more free and limitless time will come again. I am just working harder for it now so I can appreciate it more in the future.

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

You know, it's been a pretty great student experience for me so far. I have enjoyed having the freedom to work at my own pace, my tutors have been awesome and I have connected to other students through Facebook groups and the like. For me personally, this experience has been great and I am not sure I would want to change anything.

What is the most important lesson in life?

You need to know when to cut yourself some slack. We put so much pressure on ourselves sometimes. Motivation is good! But so is relaxation! We need to find that balance.

What's something people don't know about you?

I am totally addicted to those ghost shows on TV. Not because I am totally sold on the possibility of the supernatural, but because I love the history and the stories they explore. I feel that, in this day and age, the world lacks a sense of mystery; if we question anything, we google it. I love immersing myself in possibilities where people can explore something that isn't quite known for certain. I especially love hearing folklore or stories from other cultures and understanding how these stories shape beliefs and superstition.

E-texts or textbooks? Any particular reason(s)?

If you asked me last year, I would say textbooks all the way! I love having the physical books (I am a book hoarder) and being able to flip through the pages and reference them years later (and yes, I actually do this). However, I

have definitely found e-texts super helpful. It is really cool to be able to access your text wherever you are without having to lug around a giant book. For someone who is always trying to fit in extra study time on my lunch break, during my son's swimming lessons or while getting an oil change done on my car; e-texts have been a lifesaver. Ideally what I would like to see is to have access to both when purchased. You get the hard-copy of the book as well as the e-version. What a world!

How do you find the tutors?

The tutors have been awesome for me. I definitely don't have any complaints there.

Where has life taken you so far? (travels for pleasure, work, etc.)

Unfortunately, I never really had much opportunity for travel and it is something that I always kind of kicked myself for. I wish I had taken "the bull by the horns" as they say and just bought a plane ticket somewhere and just figured everything else out when I got there; but I was always such a planner in my younger youth. I always had to think of every tiny, miniscule detail and if I couldn't formulate a concise and workable plan with several other plan B's just in case then I wouldn't take that plunge. I really missed out on some great opportunities and I regret that. Luckily I have also learned from that and I now understand that there is a good balance between risk and security and it is important to explore both. I have been out of Canada once in my life. When I was 21 years old, a girlfriend and I flew down to Coachella Music Festival in Indio, CA. I met her at LAX (she was coming in from Calgary, and I from Vancouver) and we travelled for two weeks around California and into Tijuana. It was an awesome experience.

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

I am currently reading "Brain on Fire" by Susannah Calahan. It is an autobiography that explores the author's experience, through her own memories (although rather sparse) and her journalistic abilities, as she descends into "madness" caused by a condition known as Anti-NMDA receptor encephalitis. It has been rather interesting and I would recommend it to those who enjoy non-fiction and memoirs.

Women Of Interest

Margaret E. Knight was born February 14, 1838, in York, Maine, and died October 12, 1914. Knight was an inventor who has been considered the most famous 19th century woman inventor, and she was often referred to as "the lady Edison." Margaret's first and most important invention was a machine that folded and glued paper to construct flat bottom paper bags. Before this paper bags were shaped to look like envelopes, making it very difficult to pack groceries. While Ms. Knight was working on this invention a man who was working in the machine shop where her model was being developed stole her design and patented the device. Ms. Knight filed a lawsuit and in 1871 she was awarded the first of 27 subsequent patents she would receive in her lifetime. In 1871 Margaret Knight was awarded the Decoration of the Royal Legion of Honour by Queen Victoria, and in 2006 she became an inductee in the National Inventors Hall of Fame.

Additional information on this unique woman can be found at the following websites:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Margaret_E._Knight

<http://www.women-inventors.com/Margaret-Knight.asp>

<http://www.biography.com/news/famous-women-inventors-biography>

compiled by Barb Godin

E-text Initiation

Barbara Lehtiniemi



I'm not a fan of e-texts. I decided that I wouldn't like them before I even encountered one. I avoided them at all costs.

AU began converting courses from real textbooks to e-texts in 2013, under its E-text Initiative. At that time, AU announced that all courses with suitable texts would be converted to e-texts within three years. Interestingly, I first heard about AU's e-text initiative from an article in *The Voice Magazine*.

At that time, I had only completed a few courses toward my degree. I felt dismay at the possibility of having to deal with e-texts. To me, reading an e-text is like reading a PDF or online content: inconvenient, fatiguing, and not really absorbing.

I checked carefully which AU courses were converting to e-texts. If any were on my to-take list, I pushed them to the bottom of the list. I wanted to make sure I took courses that still had textbooks first. I was pleased to hear that, due to student concerns and AUSU lobbying, further e-text conversions have been put on hold.

However, that still leaves me with a few courses I want to take that are already sporting e-texts. Recently, I enrolled in one of those courses. I knew I would take it sooner or later, and it just worked out better in my schedule to take it now. I resigned myself to the e-text, with the same degree of enthusiasm I hold for medical examinations (you know which ones) and driving through Toronto.

I'm only one week into my e-text course, and my initiation is not complete. I've resisted buying the textbook so I can give the e-text a fair chance (the \$160 textbook price tag helped me resist.) Here's what I find so far:

The Good. The initial download process went smoothly. The instructions provided in AU's Student Manual didn't seem to match what I was seeing on the VitalSource Bookshelf site, so I followed my intuition and soon my e-text was loaded on my computer. I was pleased to see that I can download the e-text to multiple devices (including my tablet, but not my Kobo.) Once downloaded, I found the e-text simple to navigate and the tools (like highlighting text) straightforward. A menu of user highlights appears next to the contents navigation bar for later use, which will be a handy study aid. The audio text option was a surprise; I don't know if I'll use it, but I'm sure some students will enjoy having their text read to them. And when I copy illustrations or sections of text to my notes, Bookshelf includes bibliographic information in my choice of APA or MLA style.

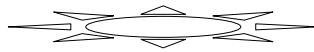
The Bad. E-texts are laid out just like most real textbooks, which is portrait orientation. My laptop's screen is landscape orientation. Consequently, I can only view up to half of one page at a time (unless I want it really small) which is especially annoying when text is laid out in columns. On my tablet, I can change the screen orientation but the screen is still too small to display a full page in a readable size. Another aspect I find restrictive is not being able to make notes in the margin. The e-text does have a notes feature built in but it

uses an inflexible format which I don't find useful. It would be easier if I could print the page to make my notes. Which brings me to:

The Ugly. Students can opt to print their e-text, but I can't imagine how much time and money it will take to print out my 600+ page e-text. Time especially, since my e-text only permits printing in 10-page increments (not all e-texts have this restriction.) That's right, I can't even take it to Staples to print out unless I want to send over 60 print jobs. And my home ink-jet printer isn't designed for this kind of printing capacity.

So, one week into my e-text journey, my feelings toward e-texts hasn't changed much: I'm still not a fan. I've learned a bit, had some pleasant surprises, and some less-than-pleasant realities. Will I make it through this course using an e-text? Yes, definitely. But I'm glad this is just a one-book course. And I hope I can complete all my multi-textbook English and History courses before the march of e-texts resumes.

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



Finding Community

Deanna Roney



Learning through distance can feel like a solitary venture. Students are given contact with a tutor, and sometimes not even that when it is a course based on the "success centre" model. But it is important to connect with the others who are taking a journey like yours—a community of AU students.

One such community is the Facebook group. It was a great place for me to post frustrations or elations (sometimes in the same day). I tend to be a quiet in the social-media world, but speaking out in these groups, commenting on others posts, and posting your own is a great way to feel validation for the range of emotions this adventure puts us through.

A great thing about social media is that, regardless of the task you are undertaking, there is a group out there for you to connect with.

I discovered the importance of these connections within the figurative walls of AU. It has served me well as I take the next steps in my journey and work toward a writing career. I have written articles that touched on the importance and usefulness of social media to make connections or in creating a personal brand, but it is also important to use it to find groups to just connect with, to vent to, or to celebrate with. These groups can be a wealth of information and give you perspective on how much you have learned along the way, as you find when you are able (with some authority) to offer advice to others.

I have found that communities of writers are encouraging, and always at the ready with tips and advice. Everyone knows how hard it is to achieve the end goal (which may be different for each writer) and works to help make that happen, whether they've reached theirs or not. If you ask for input or advice you will get it. It

may not be what you want to hear, but everyone in the community knows that brushing something off or misleading a fellow writer, while it may spare their feelings in the moment, will not help in the end. Everyone within these communities wants to see others succeed.

In the age of social media, it has never been easier to find communities of like-minded people. There are groups for everyone and many to choose from. It can take time to find one that suits you, that has the information and atmosphere that you are seeking, but they are out there. The easiest way is to search hashtags on twitter, google, and forums. These may lead you to blogs, and the blogs will lead you to groups. My preferred groups are closed; I don't want my writing woes or elations spread around on Facebook for everyone to read. I keep that part of my life close to my heart as I often don't want to answer too many questions (especially if rejections have been rolling in, or I am [im]patiently waiting for a response on requested materials). I keep a few people in the loop, but only those I am comfortable telling "I don't want to talk about it now."

Virginia Woolf stated that, to write, one needs money and a room of one's own. That applies beyond writing, beyond creativity, and throughout the academics. We need time to think, to work, and to lose ourselves in whatever occupies our mind and drives us forward. With that though, we also need community, encouragement, and support from those who have been on this leg of the journey, and those who may be a few legs behind us.

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

Scholarship of the Week

Digging up scholarship treasure for AU students.

Scholarship name: Excellence in Entrepreneurship Award

Sponsored by: Vol & Tier Digital Marketing

Deadline: November 21, 2016

Potential payout: \$4000

Eligibility restriction: Applicants must be enrolled in full-time studies and must not be in their final year.

What's required: A 1000-word essay on how the applicant has "demonstrated a strong entrepreneurial mindset." Full requirements [here](#).

Tips: If you've already had some entrepreneurial success, include that in your essay.

Where to get info: voltierdigital.com/vol-tier-digital-excellence-in-entrepreneurship



The Mindful Bard

Son of Saul

Wanda Waterman

Amid the Destruction of Life's Sanctity,
Honouring One Life as Sacred

Film: *Son of Saul*

Director: László Nemes

Writers: László Nemes and Clara Royer

"Life ultimately means taking the responsibility to find the right answers to its problems and to fulfill the task which it constantly sets for each individual."

- Viktor E. Frankl

If you imagine that your people have been rounded up and placed in an extermination camp and that *you* have been charged with helping out with the extermination, you may have an inkling of why Hungarian Sonderkommando Saul Ausländer (the family name, German for "foreigner, is deeply symbolic) walks around Auschwitz looking robotic, flat of affect, just a step away from being catatonic.

It's been said that all you need to create a plot is to show a character with a desire. Saul's desire is to give his son's body, which he discovers in the gas chamber, a proper Jewish religious

burial. But in the course of his actions he puts his own life, and the lives of other prisoners, at risk.

While standing for roll call and awaiting execution, a fellow Sonderkommando says to Saul, "You failed the living for the dead."

It's an accusation that's just, and then again it isn't; Saul has managed to honour one life as sacred even as his world conspires to utterly destroy any notions of the sanctity of life. He has also done his best to uphold religious tradition while his fellow Jews are reduced to a dehumanising battle for survival.

Seventy years later Western culture is still trying to grasp the horror of the Nazi holocaust, and we still don't seem to have a handle on it. We commemorate it, honour the victims, glorify the resistance, and create art about it. There seems to be a universal acknowledgement that it's an important ongoing task to continue to try to understand the unimaginable.

It falls to artists—poets, composers, filmmakers, etc.—to interpret the unimaginable through the use of their imagination, and at times this is a heavy load to carry.

German critics didn't like this film, and that's understandable. *Why keep reminding us? It happened. We sinned. We know. Let's go on with things.* But any hope of world peace depends on artists being willing to tackle this kind of hard subject matter in new ways, as *Son of Saul* does, in ways that give us a deeper understanding of the human condition.



This film was released just prior to the American election and, hopefully, will help put the brakes on some of the horrendous portents of evil that this election unleashed. Perhaps it will remind us that the world can't be saved by religions, by ideologies, or by partisan politics, but rather by a deep and abiding mutual human respect.

On November 4th I went to Concordia University to hear a lecture by László Rajk, *Son of Saul's* production designer and a man with his own remarkable history of political engagement. The lecture was, as such things are, a harrowing reminder, but with a measure of warmth to soothe the shocked human spirit.

I left the university haunted by one of the final questions Rajk had posed to us regarding the film: *Does this represent a new film language or not?* This of course reminded me of Francesco Casetti's assertion that film is a means of negotiating reality. It struck me first that everyone connected directly to the holocaust—that is anyone with a shred of emotional vulnerability—must have suffered from post-traumatic stress syndrome, and that the development of this illness must in some way have had an impact on the art created from holocaust memories. And second, I remembered that, historically, ISIL are largely the inheritors of Nazi ideology and methods. For both these reasons, we haven't really escaped the aftereffects of the holocaust to this day.

How to live with such a reality? As I entered the subway I heard a musician singing, "Don't Worry, Be Happy" while playing guitar. Life does often have a sick and twisted sense of humour, but there it is. When I passed I gave the guy a loonie.

Son of Saul manifests five of the Mindful Bard's criteria for films well worth seeing.

- It poses and admirably responds to questions that have a direct bearing on my view of existence.
- It inspires an awareness of the sanctity of creation.
- It displays an engagement with and compassionate response to suffering.
- It makes me want to be a better artist.
- It renews my enthusiasm for positive social action.
-

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

Student Sizzle AU's Hot Social Media Topics

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

AthaU Facebook Group

Suzanne's getting ready to take her clinicals in the Post LPN to RN program and is looking for information on what she needs to show that she has had an allergic reaction to the Flu shot and been advised not to get it again.

Lynette was looking for information about an excel formula in CMIS 245 and was answered by an academic expert for the course who is in the group.

Also, a group of students got together in Ottawa for the AUSU Meet & Greet, and some students are wanting one down in Calgary.

Twitter

@AthabascaU tweets: "We are celebrating #UPweek with @au_press! Meet the wonderful editorial community who make the big decisions: <http://ow.ly/JY0S306gQfK> "

@AthabascaUSU (AUSU) tweets: "Alberta to increase funding to help Indigenous students pursue post-secondary education! <http://bit.ly/2g2aME8> #abpse #cdnpse."





Council Connection

November 8, 2016 Meeting

Bonita Arbeau

The November 8th council meeting, which coincided with the night of the American election, lasted just under two hours and focused mostly on resolving issues related to the workload of the AUSU Executive. The meeting was plagued by technical difficulties from the beginning, resulting in some councillors participating solely through the teleconference system's chat window.

The meeting started with some discussion about last minute changes to the agenda. The executive decided to postpone reviewing the Joint Council/Voice Action Plan Committee report until a later date (to be determined), after councillors have had more time to review the committee's recommendations and receive clarification on a few items.

After approving the meeting agenda and the October 13th meeting minutes, councillors first voted on a standard resolution required by Canadian Western Trust to change signatories on AUSU's investment accounts. The motion passed unanimously.

The next item on the agenda was to approve a scaled-back 2016/2017 goals list. It was suggested that the previous goals list was overly ambitious given the limited time that the AUSU executive had available to commit to new goals and as a result, these seven goals would be removed:

- Finalizing, approving, and utilizing an AUSU Advocacy Document that outlines advocacy topics for AUSU at the federal, provincial, and institutional level;
- Observing provincial advocacy groups such as the Alberta Students' Executive Council and the Council of Alberta University Students;
- Participating on the CASA Board of Directors as possible;
- Developing a comprehensive communications plan addressing all stakeholders for AUSU;
- Finding out what members need to discuss among themselves and what council needs to allow for robust members consultation;
- Reviewing and developing processes to support AUSU staff success and satisfaction; and
- Determining what amounts AUSU should have designated as reserve funds and the value of that designation.

President Shawna Wasylyshyn also noted, with obvious frustration, that only one councillor had responded to requests for input in revising the goals list and that Executive had been forced to decide on the goals without input from the rest of council. She questioned if councillors were receiving her emails or if there was some other reason for the lack of response..

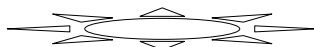
After a further call for feedback on the amendments, Councillor Scott Jacobsen responded he was disappointed that the goal of observing provincial advocacy groups (i.e. Alberta Students' Executive Council and the Council of Alberta University Students) would be removed from AUSU goals for the next year. New Councillor Robin Bleich commented she did not feel informed enough on what was expected of her, although she expressed her willingness to learn. However, no other councillors participated in this discussion. Perhaps they were all watching the results come in from the US election (I admit, I was checking them every five minutes!) but the lack of participation by councillors on such an important item to AUSU members was concerning.

When called to vote on the revised goals, VP Finance Kim Newsome voted "nay" to protest the policy being changed due to the lack of participation of council. All other councillors voted in favour of the revised list. This vote meant that council's goals for the next year will be significantly reduced. Several goals identified by AU students in the AUSU 2016 Services Survey and that were key outcomes from Council's in-person retreat to Edmonton this past August were removed, including researching platforms for membership discussion and creating an AUSU advocacy document.

Next, several proposed policy changes were up for discussion, all with the intent of making the AUSU President an "ex-officio, non-voting" member of all AUSU committees. The President is currently required to be an "active, voting" member of every AUSU committee, a commitment that occupies a great deal of the President's time. This change would have the effect of allowing the President to miss meetings without penalization and without impacting quorum. This topic *did* generate much discussion, and council reached a consensus that the President should not be required to be a member of every AUSU committee. Councillor Andrew Gray argued the President could still be a member of any committee if they so choose, but this change would allow other councillors or AUSU members to step up and be more involved in committee leadership. Everyone agreed, and the necessary changes were made in the affected policies.

The Executive Councillors, committee chairs and staff then presented their monthly reports. Items of interest from this portion of the meeting were that the 2017 pocket calendars have been ordered, AU student emails are still a work-in-progress, and AUSU ended its fiscal year with a much smaller deficit than predicted.

The next council meeting is scheduled for December 13th at 5:30 MST.



The Creative Spark

Thrillers: Essay-Style

Marie Well



Can you bake a cake or build Lego houses? Of course, you can. Now, let's up the stakes: a chiffon cake; a Trump tower. You're going to build them—essay style. That is, Natalie Portman-at-Harvard style.

First, we'll put some passion into your essay outlines. Like fun with custom stonework or lifelike teddy-bear cake molds. You can make your essay-outlines thrilling. Impossible?

Well, we're going to take the icing sugar and quartz—your essay's ingredients—and plunk them in the cinemas.

Yes, we'll use screenwriter's tricks to make your papers shine like the silver screen. *Your Screenplay Sucks!* by William M. Akers shows us how to structure screenplays and I bleed Akers' ideas for essay drama: A-plots, not B-roll. With exceptions, of

course—for exceptional structures. (Akers is the bold-font text below; I am the plain-font parody.)

Take notes. Use tape recorders, 3X5 cards, or even napkins. Record everything that crosses your mind about your topic or theme. Then write everything you know about the people you cite. Look those creatures up on Wikipedia. Profile them.

What's at stake? Ask yourself why your research question is important. Ask yourself what "so-what" the people you cite give your topic or question. Steal (but cite) their "so-what" reasoning.

Make them cry, laugh, and shudder. Add emotion. Whenever something in your essay stirs the emotions, dwell on it. But puff up the emotional stuff with lots of support.

Tape your theme to your computer screen. Put your thesis statement in clear view—like a daily reminder to make it fun.

Make your heroes sympathetic. If you write about people or objects or events that suck, make those subjects a tad likable. When you write about tornadoes, cite those storms' beauty. When you write about Peter the Great's wars, cite how he wooed his people. When you write about Judas, cite how Jesus loved him.

Put the hero in conflict. Put your tornado at risk of slaughtering whole villages. Put Peter the Great at risk of hearing "boos" from the crowds. Put Judas at risk of getting sucked into hell. Make the issue so big it could destroy your hero.

Make your scenes rise in tension. Order your arguments from the least controversial—the least exciting—to the most. Jokesters, though, say start with your second-best argument and end with the zinger. Slip the trash somewhere in the middle—or take it out.

Burst open with the initial incident. Lead up to your research question. And make your research question a thriller.

Make a one-page outline. Take the big themes (and surprises) of your topic. Put them on a blank page as headings with some space following. Then, fill in each space with supporting quotes. Make sure the themes (and surprises) tie into your thesis statement.

Too many themes? Then, combine themes under more general headings. That way, you can cram more material into your thesis statement. And cut out the junk.

Use a subplot. You can slip in a subplot if it ties into your main plot. If you talk about earthquakes, maybe have a subplot about the people in Japan, and then tie the Japanese into a major life-taking earthquake. Use imagery like "moving refrigerators" to capture intensity. Consult your professor before you make subplots.

Hide backstory with an argument or a joke—or skin backstory to its bare bones. If your thesis is about Peter the Great's biggest battle—and you need to tell backstory—trim the fat. Even tell the backstory with conflicting views for fun. Take a position, though. And cite.

Sprinkle in surprises or twists every fifteen pages. In your essay, slip in a surprise or twist every half a page. Build up to the surprise, but support the surprise. Maybe your disabled athlete had a run-in with alcoholism—a run-in that trashed his global fundraiser. That's a surprise. Or play up a twist. Here's a twist: the FBI reopens the Clinton case—just before the election.

Surprise! You can now turn boring outlines into eye-poppers. A paradox? I call it a Creative Spark!

References

Akers., William M., *Your Screenplay Sucks!: 100 Ways to Make it Great.*, Michael Weise Productions, 2008, Studio City, CA.

Canadian Science News

Scott Jacobsen



Canada in search for the national science advisor

According to [Science Magazine](#), there will be an opening for nominations by the Canadian federal government for the national science advisor, which was announced at an annual science policy conference by Minister of Science Kirsty Duncan.

The nominations will be open to the average "Canadians, researchers, as well as institutions such as universities." This is based on a promise by Prime Minister Justin Trudeau. He vowed "to usher in an era of evidence-based policy."

"We want to make sure we get a wealth of expertise in science. They have to be respected by the scientific community," Duncan said, "They have to understand the research community, as well as how government works. And they have to be a very good communicator."

Canadian scientists hint at alien life

[The Globe and Mail](#) reports that a Canadian research team is on the look out for alien life. Universite Laval, in Quebec City, researchers analyzed some signals with unusual traits. They made identifications of "234 potential systems that might be playing host to extra-terrestrial intelligence (ETI)."

Emanno Borra published an article in 2012, which speculated on Milky Way galaxy extraterrestrials trying to make their existence known to others. Borra described the possibility of aliens using lasers to make their "home planet" emit unusual signals.

Borra said, "The kind of signal we found is in agreement with the ETI hypothesis, but right now it's still a hypothesis that must be confirmed with further work."

Oil spill research and Environment Canada

"A team of Environment Canada scientists is trying to fill key research gaps among oil spill response officials as a looming increase in oil tanker traffic raises worries for coastal communities," [iPolitics](#) says, "Environment Canada and Climate Change has been producing field guides."

The guides are on the behavior of oil in water after long periods. The Director of Science and Technology Policy at Environment Canada, Jen Collette, described the non-digitization of the guides and technical language as barriers to wider availability of the guides.

Collette stated that since the guides are physical, not digital, "You've either got one or you haven't got one." Even with acquisition, they might be difficult to access conceptually because of the "fairly technical language."



Study Tips from a Semi-Anonymous Friend

Tell Off a Prof?

There is nothing more that The Study Dude wants for you than to make your beef a prime rib—not a whopper.

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 takes notes from *Writing that Works, 3e: How to Communicate Effectively in Business* by Kenneth Roman and Joel Raphaelson.

Sizzle

Did you ever want someone to look spectacular? I hosted a charity event, and I wanted a celebrity newscaster—my emcee—to sizzle.

As backstory, I met the celebrity at another event he emceed; at that event, the coordinator said he fizzled. But I knew what went wrong—and how to fix it. You see, newscasters read teleprompters. So, give a newscaster a speech to read. *Duh!*

So I hired a doctoral student and the speech read beautifully. Short punchy lines. Humor. And the applause? Deafening. The lady who said he fizzled asked, "How did you get him to shine?" Well, would you get an astronaut to build the ship? No. Give him the ship.

Roman and Raphaelson share tricks to make your business writing sizzle:

- Write short: short paragraphs, short sentences, short words. (Academic writing uses longer paragraphs and sentences, but sprinkle in your shorts. Now that's a play on words you don't want to take literally.)
- Use big words when they are more concise.
- But beware, big words are more abstract; they often suggest you lack clarity. But if your big words are precise, consider them gems.
- Use active voice. If first-person (I or me) isn't allowed, then you may be stuck with passive.
- Use clear and specific adjectives and adverbs: don't say, "we'll soon be late." Instead, say, "Tomorrow will be too late."—quantify.
- Use adjectives and adverbs that add to the meaning and don't just repeat it: don't say, "highly proficient." Instead say, "Nobel-prize proficient."
- Don't use jargon. Uses down-to-earth words instead.
- Write like you talk.
- Know the definition of every word you write.
- Cut out the extra words. Don't say, "Despite the notion that..." Instead, say, "Although..."
- Don't write clauses inside clauses.
- Write like you would talk to your best friend, and then touch it up with formality.

Complain to the Prof

Did you ever tell-off a prof?

I had a feminist studies professor—an unprepared professor. I hungered for feminist theory, but she taught Mork from Ork. Yes, Robin Williams in his 80s sitcom.

But first, let's back up. What sparked my interest in feminism?

I once politically campaigned with a radical feminist; she sat the eager me in a board meeting of a feminist magazine. But I was a misfit—a high-school dropout; I knew more about Value Village than the right to vote. Yet, I upgraded and enrolled in university, rushing to take a feminist class.

On the first day of feminist class, the professor asked, "What would Mork from Ork, an alien from another planet, say about Earth's women?"

The second day of class, the same Mork from Ork question. Most days, Mork from Ork. The professor had a life, just not in school.

Later, I overheard a student curse the professor for too much Mork. But, the student got it wrong: Don't get even—get results.

Let's look at the art of complaints, according to Roman and Raphaelson:

- When saying no, be ultra compassionate. Don't say, "Your paper lacked substance. Poorly written. You got a C." Instead, say, "I can imagine how difficult it will be to hear this. I'm sorry, but you got a C on your paper. Here's why I gave that grade ... If you still feel you deserve a higher grade, please let me know where I might have got it wrong." Sincerely explain your reasons for saying no.
- When complaining, don't aim to tell-off someone; aim to get results. Write about all the actions the person needs to do to resolve your complaint fairly.
- When responding to a complaint, don't read into it. If it's fair, say how you'll address it. Say sorry. Ask for continued relations.

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

Roman, Kenneth, and Raphaelson, Joel. (n.d.). 3rd Ed. *Writing that Works, 3e: How to Communicate Effectively in Business*. Harper Collins e-books.

AU-thentic events

Upcoming AU Events

Google Scholar Webinar

Saturday, November 19, 12:00 to 1:00pm MST

Online, Adobe Connect

Hosted by AU Library

library.athabascau.ca/news

Login to webinar at:

<https://athabascau.adobeconnect.com/library/>

AU Faculty of Business Toronto Seasonal Cheer

Thursday, November 24, 5:30 to 7:30pm EST

The University Club of Toronto, 380 University Avenue, Toronto, Ontario

In-person

Hosted by Athabasca University's Faculty of Business

<http://business.athabascau.ca/event-details/au-faculty-of-business-toronto-seasonal-cheer-2/>

Register online at above address

Bannock and a Movie "Jumbo Wild"

Friday, November 25, 12:05 to 1:00pm MST

Athabasca University, Peace Hills Trust Tower, 12th floor, Room 1222,

10011 - 109 Street Edmonton, Alberta

In-person; limited seating

Hosted by AU Centre for World Indigenous Knowledge and Research

indigenous.athabascau.ca/bannock

Register by phone (780)428-2064 or e-mail ivy@athabascau.ca.



Recommitting to Trying

For as long as I can remember I've voyeuristically peeped into the inner sanctum of creative people. I love seeing the studio and office spaces of artists, artisans, crafters, designers, jewelry makers, and writers. I try to put myself into the space and see how it fits. I consider the feng shui implications. I consider the aesthetics and the functionality. I usually covet the size.

If the space belongs to personal artist friends, that's easy. I have a look around the studio or workshop and notice how and why they configure their space the way they do. Where possible, I've stolen and adapted the best of those ideas for my own use. That's how I learned to use pipe insulation to protect metal picture frames. Or convert large mirror moving boxes into a safe way to accommodate and transport completed paintings to and from art shows. Or the best way to store supplies and completed works.

I love watching in situ interviews with writers. I take note of how cluttered or not their offices and desktops are. I try to read book titles on the inevitable wall/s of bookcases. I look for organizational tools, mementoes, and talismans. I wish I had space to display my antique Underwood typewriter in my office.

Storyboards, fabric swatches, inspirational quotes, framed art, bolts of fabric, objet d'art, photos, plants, and works in progress all grab me with their beauty and possibility. Storage systems that are just right for the job at hand make me marvel. I love drafting boards, including my own! I notice the size and style of their desks. Though I cannot fathom those desks that are merely tables, especially round ones. Who can live without drawers? I notice light quality. I deplore the desks facing walls but understand how that becomes necessary in small spaces. Apparently, Stephen King began his career writing on a card table in the laundry room and he's done okay for himself.

I've got two old books, *From the Desk of* (1989) and *The Home Office* (1997), that show computer monitors the size of boat motors (or even electric typewriters!), ancient double pedestal desks, and office chairs more designer than ergonomic. There was even a photo of a standing desk so their current popularity isn't exactly new. Some photos show collections run amok: Admiral

Wm. Crowe, Jr.'s wall-to-wall collection of headgear or Roger Ebert's Mickey Mouse collectibles.

Where Women Create and *A Room of Her Own* show me more options for sanctuaries. Whether the owner is creating sacred space for meditation and yoga or indoor gardening or a reflective reading area, there is inspiration galore. I delight in the visual treat in all these pages.

I encourage all of us to take another look around at our personal office, den, studio—the place where we are living and creating. Odds are, it's not perfect. It probably could be better. Until it is, can we agree to allow it to be and do that which makes our hearts sing? I'm recommitting to trying, 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

Doggy Bagged

Dear Barb:

Hi, I have a family dilemma. I am the second oldest of four children. We weren't a wealthy family, but we did ok. My parents were pretty generous with us until recently. Whenever we would go out for dinner they would pay, but now they want us to pay for our own meals. It seems to me if they invite us out, they should pay. Two of us are still in university and don't have extra money, so I guess we won't be going out for dinner with our families. What do you think, if someone invites you out for dinner, shouldn't they pay? Thanks Nick.

Hey Nick:

Thanks for your letter. Your question can't be answered with a simple "yes" or "no." Normally when someone invites you out for dinner they pay, unless you discuss ahead of time who pays, and it seems your parents have done this. Raising four children is an expensive venture. Perhaps your parents are planning for the next phase of their lives right now, which is likely saving for retirement, or maybe they are already retired. If they are retired they will be living on a fixed income and their money must last for the rest of their lives. You should have a discussion with your siblings. Perhaps you could have a simple meal that would be less expensive, or even go for lunch instead of dinner. Also, you could take turns preparing meals at each other's homes. The main thing is that you get together as a family, but going out for dinner can be quite expensive. So, don't expect your parents to keep paying, especially if they are no longer working. Hope this helps.

Dear Barb:

I just adopted a Golden Retriever pup and my girlfriend hates it! I love my girlfriend, but I also love my dog. She wants me to get rid of Toby, but I can't do that, I love the dog. She says he is wild and uncontrollable. He chewed up one of her favorite shoes and it seems she has been on a mission to get rid of him since then. We are arguing all the time, so I end up putting Toby in his crate more than I want. Do you think I should be forced to get rid of my dog? Thanks, Rob.

Hi Rob:

You don't mention whether you and your girlfriend live together, but I will assume you do. Are you sure she hates your dog, or is it just his behaviour? If she hates your dog's behaviour, you can do something about that. Send Toby to obedience classes, I believe they can begin training fairly young. Obedience training can do wonders for an unruly dog. However if she hates your dog, it doesn't matter what you do she will still hate your dog. If your girlfriend is unable to like or accept your dog, then your home won't be a happy one for any of you. Unfortunately, you may have to find another home for your faithful companion. Thanks for writing Rob.

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.





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Student Lifeline - Caregivers

More than eight million Canadians -- including many young people -- say they're caring for a friend or relative who is ill, disabled, or elderly. It could be at home, nearby, or from a distance. Although caregiving is rewarding, it's also hard work and it can be one of life's most challenging experiences.

If you're trying to locate in-home care or other service providers to help you, if you're stressed, or if you feel overwhelmed by trying to balance school, work, and caring for a loved one, **Student LifeLine** is here with support and resources.

This is a FREE service for all AUSU members!

Contact **Student LifeLine** any time, 24/7 at **1-800-567-2255 (TTY:1-877-371-9978)** to speak with a caring consultant for expert advice.

You can also log in any time to www.lifeworks.com (username: **AUSU**, password: **wellness**) to access a wealth of helpful articles and tools, including:

- A new podcast, [Caregiving Tips for the Sandwich Generation](#), with tips for caregivers on planning ahead and coping day to day.
- Articles: [Caregiver Stress and Finding Support](#), [Long-distance Caregiving](#), [Involving Family Members in Caring for an Older Relative](#), [The Sandwich Generation](#), [When You Become Your Partner's Caregiver](#).
- A full-length recording, [Sharing and Caring](#)
- Podcast, [Caring for a Loved one with Dementia](#).

Student Lifeline provides help and support 24/7 for any issues, from health, wellness, work, life, money, school, community referrals, and more!

IMPORTANT DATES

- **Nov 30:** December course extension deadline
- **Dec 10:** [Deadline to register in a course starting Jan 1](#)
- **Dec 13:** [AUSU Council Meeting](#)
- **Dec 15:** January degree requirements deadline
- **Dec 25 – Jan 3:** Holiday Closure (AUSU and AU)
- **Jan 10:** [Deadline to register in a course starting Feb 1](#)
- **Jan 10:** [AUSU Council Meeting](#)

Student LifeLine

WHAT CAN IT DO FOR YOU?

Learn about all the resources we offer to help you handle the demands and stresses of caregiving.

LifeWorks.com

User ID **AUSU**

Password **wellness**

Help is at your fingertips, 24/7

Available on the App Store

ANDROID APP ON Google play

Get it at BlackBerry World

AUSU ATHABASCA UNIVERSITY STUDENTS' UNION

AUSU in Ottawa for Advocacy Week!

Our three AUSU executives are currently in Ottawa with CASA for Advocacy Week, where they are advocating for post-secondary education in Canada on Parliament Hill. Find out more about Advocacy Week online [here](#).

Stay tuned for details about the trip soon!

#AdvoWeek #SemAction

CASA'S 2016 **ADVOCACY WEEK**

Nov. 14-18 nov.

SEMAINE D'ACTION 2016 DE L'ACAE

CLASSIFIEDS

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

Help a Fellow Student Out!

Are you a mom? And are or were you a student within the last two years?

If both, I hope you can spare 10-15 minutes to take a survey that will help me research how student moms balance those two different roles, navigate the challenges of them, and help me find common themes in the group. The survey questions are anonymous and the results could help universities be more accommodating to your needs. Please email me at megan.camp@hotmail.ca with any questions or if you'd like the link to fill out the survey!

THE VOICE

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