

THE VOICE

MAGAZINE

Vol 24 Issue 48 2016-12-16

Remembering Christmas

The Spirit of the Season

A Bursary Under the Tree

Be Your Own Santa

The Mindful Bard

KyΔzMa

Plus:

*Tickled Title Page
Scholarship of the Week
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.

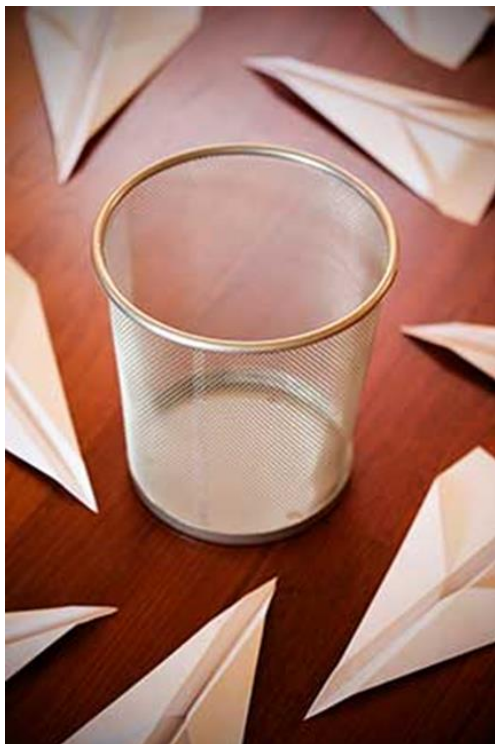
Hey! Did you know the Voice Magazine has a [Facebook page](#)?

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

EDITORIAL

Not Just the Facts

Karl Low



We're in the closing weeks of the year. Soon eyes will turn to top ten lists of the year, resolutions, and exclamations about where the year went.

AU is closing for the holidays soon, and many of us will make promises to use this time to really forge ahead on our courses or other tasks we've been too busy to get around to, knowing even as we do that the chances of that really happening are unlikely. There's just too much to do during the season, whether it's hanging out with friends or family, shopping, cooking, or even the surprise Christmas gift that we just can't pull ourselves away from.

But take heart, you're not alone. We've all been there, we've all done that, and we'll likely all do it again as well, and yet, we still persevere somehow. I've seen a couple people in the Facebook group posting about how, as they near the completion of their courses, motivation falls away, and they get understandably frustrated at themselves. AU is difficult because it's often hard to see that when something like that happens, it really isn't just you, so your failures become magnified in your own eyes.

All of this leads into our feature article this week, as Deanna Roney looks at the season and urges us to remember what it stands for; not the religious meaning, but the other meanings the season has come to encompass, of tolerance and compassion, of reconnecting to what's important to you. Essentially, of "Remembering Christmas"

This is also the season where the bills start to stack up, but, once again, *The Voice Magazine* brings you some tips on where you might be able to find a little bit extra, as Barb L. fills us in on the upcoming bursary opportunities from AUSU. Their November awards deadline passed recently, but that doesn't mean you can't start planning for the next deadline.

If I can make one comment on current events, this week, the news has been about how Russia is alleged to have interfered in the United States' election. Whether they did or didn't, and from what I've seen it seems likely that they did, we're looking at the wrong problem. Without tampering with voting machines, which so far there's been no evidence of, all their interference seems to be is publishing emails revealing the sausage factory that happens in politics. And while, unfortunately for the Democrats, it was only their sausage factory that was exposed, the biggest influence that the hacks had was giving some fodder for the news cycle. As we've seen in the days following however, a far bigger influence was likely the fake news that was emerging every day.

Now fake news has lead a man to shoot up a restaurant, thinking it hid a child-sex ring. But what all this tells us is that Russian hacking isn't the problem. Fake news isn't the problem. The problem is that we're not educating people in how to think critically and investigate impartially. If we really want a better world, we need to overhaul our primary education system. We cannot simply teach facts anymore, because that teaches people that facts get handed to us. Yet, these days, it seems that's no longer the case.

Enjoy the read!

A stylized, handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Karl". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long, sweeping tail on the final letter.

Remembering Christmas

Deanna Roney



Christmas is a time of year that many cannot ignore. There are a few religions that do not celebrate the holiday but I would argue that the holiday itself is no longer an entirely religious holiday. It is taught that it is a holiday centred on the birth of Christ. But if we are speaking of origins, the Pagans were among the first to celebrate the Winter Solstice as the rebirth of the sun.

My intent is not to dispute anyone's beliefs but to emphasize that this is a holiday that has many meanings to people. There are many who celebrate the rebirth of the sun instead of the birth of Christ. There are many who celebrate neither. For many it is a holiday about family and friends. A time to reconnect with those who are important to you and to make the time to just be with them. There is an exchange of gifts with some, though I am sure not all. These are intended to show appreciation for that person. Christmas can become overwhelming and it can be easy to fall into the commercial idea of the holiday. However, it is important to remember that the intent of the gift is the meaning and thought behind it, not the money spent.

It is a time of year to be tolerant. To understand that everyone is going to celebrate in their own way and to be mindful that just because their way isn't yours doesn't mean it is less important. It is easy in society today to condemn those around us. To challenge their beliefs and throw yours out as being superior. I urge everyone this year to reconsider—to ask yourself, how does their believing effect you?

Last Christmas we did not put up a tree. We spent the holiday at the lake and, because of that, opted to leave everything packed away. It was nice in a way, to not have to decorate and then put everything back together after the holidays. But this year we broke them out and set them up. It is a way to remind ourselves of what is important at this time of year. It was more for the time we spent together decorating and chatting, distracted by nothing else, than the decorations themselves. It was a blissful reminder of what is important, the quiet moments, the loud moments, but just the moments when we find our way back to each other, to ourselves.

It seems odd to talk about finding yourself over the holidays when it is often a stress-filled time of the year. With dinners to cook, gifts to buy (and wrap), commitments to make, and schedules to keep. But I have found my way back to enjoying the holidays (rather than merely surviving) by remembering these things. The important things. This holiday season I urge you to remember what matters the most, to take pleasure in the quiet moments and not lose yourself to the commercialism of it all. Take pride in finding the perfect gift that you just *know* someone will love and hold on to that, rather than wondering if you have spent the same amount on them as they on you.

We create stress for ourselves during these holidays, and it is time to take them back. Take them for what they were meant to be. Find your way back to your family, your friends, and yourself, and take pleasure in the time away from school and work—the hamster wheel—and recharge.

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

A Bursary Under the Tree

Barbara Lehtiniemi



'Tis the season when money seems to flow out more than in. Regardless of to what degree you do—or do not—celebrate Christmas, this time of year is peak season for spending. Social gatherings, gifts, travel—the list of expenses is endless. If you're already short on money, this seasonal drain of funds is even tougher to endure, leaving fewer resources for important things—like education.

What you need is to boost your money inflow. If you're facing some unique financial challenges and can demonstrate financial need, you may qualify for an [AUSU bursary](#). AUSU exists to serve its members and providing bursaries is one way to reduce barriers to education—not just at Christmas, but all year long.

AUSU offers two groups of bursaries; the first group are available year-round, while the second group have semi-annual application deadlines of May 1 and November 1.

There are four year-round bursaries available to students who can demonstrate financial need. The first is a Computer Bursary, which provides up to eight computers per year for students who need a computer for their course work. The second is an Emergency Bursary, which provides funds to students who need help paying for course extensions or supplemental exam fees. The Emergency Bursary provides up to \$700 per student per year; the total available fund for this bursary is \$6000 per year. The third bursary is a Health Care Bursary, to help students pay for their own health care plan. The Health Care Bursary provides up to \$1000 per student but will continue only until the allocated fund of \$18,000 is exhausted. And, fourth, the Travel Bursaries, are designed to help students pay for travel and accommodation related to their AU studies, including convocation. The Travel Bursaries provide up to \$1000 per student; the total available fund is \$4000 per year.

If none of the above bursaries apply to your situation, check out the bursaries available next spring. There are two types of AUSU bursaries available in the May awards cycle; applications for these bursaries will open by the beginning of April. The first of these is the general AUSU Bursaries, intended to assist students facing exceptional life circumstances. The AUSU Bursaries provide up to \$1000 per student and there are ten bursaries available annually. The second is the new Single Parent Bursary, designed to assist AU students who are the sole primary care provider for at least one child under 18. There are only two awards available during the 2016-2017 fiscal year; since there was no successful applicant in the November 2016 awards cycle, both \$1000 bursaries will be available during the May 2017 awards cycle.

For all AUSU bursaries, applicants must be AUSU members who have completed a minimum number of AU credits (minimum 12 AU credits for most bursaries; a minimum of 30 credits for the Single Parent Bursary,) and have maintained a minimum 2.00 GPA over the most recent specified number of credits. Read the details for each bursary for full eligibility requirements. Applicants must back-up their claim of financial need with specific financial information; read the [online application form](#) carefully and include all information requested in order to be considered for a bursary.

AUSU reviews its bursary offerings regularly to ensure they are providing relevant assistance to members. If none of the above bursaries will "fit" under your Christmas tree this year, check AUSU's [Scholarship, Awards & Bursaries](#) page periodically for new and improved bursaries.

Bursary applications typically take one to two weeks for AUSU to process, with a quicker turnaround time for Emergency Bursaries. Be sure to include all the information requested on the application form to reduce the chance of delays or disqualification. If you have questions about AUSU Bursaries or the bursary application, [contact AUSU](#).

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



The Creative Spark

Tickled Title Page

Marie Well



Would you go to a job interview dressed in tattered pants—or a Victoria Secret's naughty nighty? First impressions are lasting impressions. My grade-seven teacher taught me that after I clowned up a book report.

But for essays, your title page serve as a first impressions. So, let your title page cheer "I care!" with a splash of design.

Psychologically, your professor's first peek at your title page could up that grade. And everyone knows books are judged by their covers—at least, in the checkout aisle.

Now, you don't need skills in InDesign. You just need a spattering of quick tips. The non-comedic Robin Williams writes *The Non-Designer's Design book: Design and Typographic Principles for the Visual Novice*. I add a little essay insight.

Spray on the Contrast. No, not your subtle eyeliner, Sis, your plastered black eyebrows. Spray gobs on. Make your title text larger than the rest. Much larger. Or darker. Or neon red. Give it stark contrast. Maybe use a fancy font for the title text with a skinny font for the body. Or use a big fat font with the title and a spindly font with the body. Just give the title and the body fonts contrast.

Or if you use an image, make the image extra-large. In other words, give your title page one central focus, whether it's your title, your image, or (for the narcissists) your name.

Repeat Elements. In theses, if you use a heading, use the same font and size for each heading. Do the same with your title page: use the same font and size for both your name and your prof's name. Use another font for both title and subtitle (but maybe in vastly different sizes).

For repetition, you can even use the same line spacing between the course name, the prof's name, and your own name. To do so, in MS Word, go to the little arrow on the bottom-right corner of the ribbon section called Paragraph and click. On the screen that pops up, go to *Indents and Spacing > Spacing > After* and enter a value. Instant design delirium.

A double return for line spacing screams amateur.

Align left; align right; don't align center. Center sucks. Except if you're an NHL hockey player.

For your essay, use only one alignment per page—preferably not center. But for your title page, you want some visual interest. So, when making your title page in MS Word, go to *Insert > Text > Text Box*. You'll have an instant textbox. Right click on one of the edges, and you'll get the option to Format Auto Shape / Picture. Here, set the outline color to *no color*.

Then comes the magic. Left align the text inside the text box. Then, drag the left edge of the textbox somewhere between the center and left margin. Just not centered. This will add a nice professional touch.

Or right align the text in the textbox and put it somewhere between the center and left margin. Just not centered. Another splash of class.

I lied. You can also use two text alignments (with two textboxes). In this case, imagine a thick vertical line anywhere on the page, but not on the center point. Then, create two text boxes on either side of the imaginary thick line. On the left-hand side text box, right-align the text. On the right-hand side text box, left-align the text. Boxes of fun.

Put similar stuff together. Lump stuff together that fits together logically. Separate that stuff from the rest. (But keep the alignment constant.) If you include your email and phone, then put them together. Put your prof's name and course name together. Separate each of these chunks with some white space. But left-align (or right-align) for a professional touch.

Make the white space a simple, uniform shape, not an erratic splash. (When making a title page, draw a single imaginary line around all of your white space. Make sure that white space imaginary line looks kind of uniform, not wild.)

When you put little bits of text in all four corners and text on the page's center, then your white space gets trapped in an ugly shape. Let your white space breathe, by making it look more like a simple, uniform shape rather than an erratic splash stuck inside the page.

Does that make sense? If not, get both amateur and professional business cards and draw single borders around the whitespace, compliments of Robin Williams. If the whitespace border line looks fairly uniform, you're good to go.

A little design magic and you've got the makings of a ticklish title page. Say pro at the get-go (especially if what follows lags). A paradox? I call it a creative spark.

The Mindful Bard

KyΔzMa

Wanda Waterman



What the Bodhisattva Heard Before Turning Back to Minister to the Lost Children of Earth

Album: *The Magician's Mirror*

Artist: KyΔzMa

"The soul, the centre of the sacred self,
You see with the third eye,
Not with a mind that's going 'round and 'round and
'round ..."

- from "The Circle" by KyΔzMa

The lyrics of these songs are so brilliant they're scary, manifesting an old-soul spirituality and indicating an extensive erudition. "Magician Man," for example, presents the story (whether intentional or not is hard to tell) of that part of Plato's *Republic* often referred to as "The Sun, the Line, and the Cave." Plato states that most human beings don't see reality as it is, but as shadows projected onto the

walls of the "caves" they inhabit. The true thinker leaves the cave and sees reality face to face.

In "Magician Man", a young magician makes paper creatures and uses them to perform shadow plays on the walls of a cave. The chorus pleads on behalf of the true thinker: "Magician Man, I see you working. Now I ask you gently: 'Can you lead me from this cave? Lead me into light, because these shadow stories are getting kind of old, and your magician eyes can't hold me anymore.'"

Montreal-based bandmembers, Christina Enigma and William Moon, sound like they rode into the universe on a magic carpet. Their wall of sound is so authentic, so passionate, so powerful, and so self-confident that it's in danger of morphing into its own religion, or at least becoming too esoteric to be taken seriously. But the music, beautiful and innovative as it is, is there to support the lyrics and their message, which is an ancient one: Turn inward and become aware of what can't be perceived with the senses alone, because truth is safe, loving, and full of light if you can only see it face to face.

Why do they call it electro-folk? Electronic and acoustic instruments are both front and centre, and the sound experiments are unique and engaging, but the folk aspect prevails. The guitar is as lovely and resonant as Joni Mitchell's early recordings, but it's played hard, almost angrily.

"The Circle" starts out with Moon and Enigma jamming clumsily on what sounds like a toy piano and an untuned guitar. The music gains consonance as it moves into repeating the prophecy, "We are moving into magical times."

The title of the track "Samsara" denotes the cyclical nature of being, often interpreted to mean reincarnation. "I am an infinite self, I am eternal," the lyrics explain. "And if your bones should turn to dust, so that your soul

might ride the wind, you'll find that death is a warrior's life; you're going home."

"Cosmic Serpent" reveals a way of thinking arrived at by all mystical souls after years of contemplation: "We are pieces of the sun— we are God. Let my body be a temple— set me free."

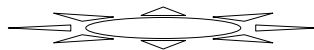
The spiritual concepts presented in this album are profoundly stimulating artistically, being closely related to the creative process. But they may not be around for long.

Rhapsodic folk music and metaphysical poetry both tend to flourish, as does all romantic art, during liberal epochs, and recent events indicate that the liberal fabric of North American society is getting a little moth-eaten. Best listen to KyΔzMa while you still can.

The Magician's Mirror manifests eight of the Mindful Bard's criteria for music well worth a listen.

- It's authentic, original, and delightful.
- It poses and admirably responds to questions that have a direct bearing on my view of existence.
- It provides respite from a sick and cruel world, a respite enabling me to renew myself for a return to mindful artistic endeavor.
- It's about attainment of the true self.
- It inspires an awareness of the sanctity of creation.
- It gives me artistic tools.
- It makes me want to be a better artist.
- 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*.



Student Sizzle AU's Hot Social Media Topics

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

AthaU Facebook Group

Kelly seeks motivation to finish the last courses of her BHRLR. JoAnne wonders if anyone else besides her bakes instead of working on a 4000-word paper. Cass looks for confirmation that she can write an exam up to January 15 for a December 31 contract end date.

Other posts include AUSU, bouncing AU e-mails, Grammarly, and study buddies.

Twitter

@AthabascaU tweets: "'This is where truth is stranger than fiction...' #AthaU's new Writer in Residence chimes in on #USPolitics: <http://ow.ly/Vofq3073TU4>."

@AthabascaUSU (AUSU) tweets: "Need new glasses in time for the holidays? Check out AUSU's Eyewear Discounts through FYiDoctors! <http://bit.ly/2bju6uG>."

Youtube

Watch AU's new Writer in Residence, John Vaillant, talk about Ten Lessons from a Tiger.



Women of Interest

Melitta Bentz was born January 31, 1879, in Dresden, Germany and died June 29, 1950, in Porta Westfalica, West Germany. She is credited with inventing the coffee filter, in 1908.

Bentz was unhappy with the coffee makers of her day, which included percolators and espresso-type apparatuses, that always left grounds in the coffee. After testing a variety of papers, Bentz ended up using blotting paper from her son's school workbook, which she punctured with small nails. She then inserted the paper in a brass pot and poured the coffee through it, thus creating ground free coffee. Melitta was granted a patent on June 20, 1908, and along with her husband and two sons, began mass production of the Melitta coffee filter soon after. In 1910 her company won a gold medal at the International Health Foundation and then a silver medal at the Saxon Innkeeper's Association. The Melitta Group continues to be a successful business and is managed by Bentz's two grandsons.

Additional information about Melitta Bentz and her successful business can be found at the following websites:

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

<http://www.coffeebureau.co/blog/2014/10/31/the-legacy-of-melitta-bentz>

compiled by Barb Godin

Scholarship of the Week

Digging up scholarship treasure for AU students.

Scholarship name: Scribendi Community Leadership Scholarship

Sponsored by: Scribendi Inc.

Deadline: December 31, 2016

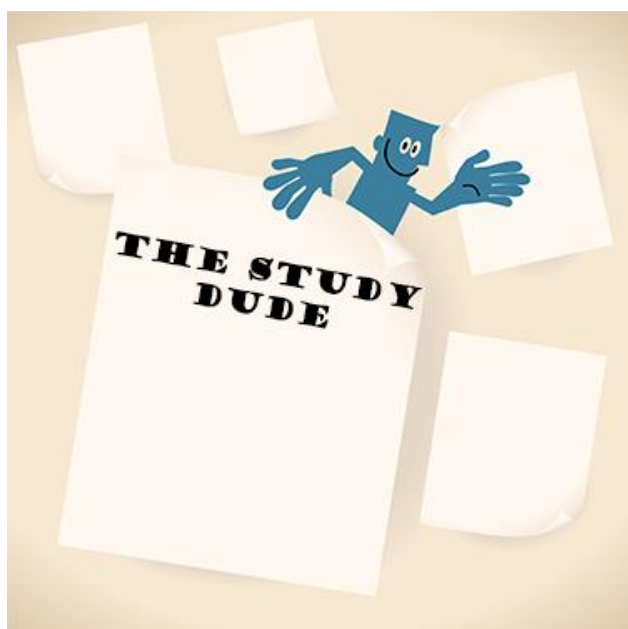
Potential payout: \$1000 U.S.

What's required: A 150-word essay on why you're a community leader, along with a completed online application form.

Tips: Read the scholarship details, and check out two past winners to get some ideas. You only have 150 words and Scribendi is an editing company, so make every word count!

Where to get info: www.scribendi.com/scholarship





Study Tips from a Semi-Anonymous Friend

The Bad Ant Motel

There is nothing more that The Study Dude wants than for you to prep for exams with wild imagery.

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 looks at Mark A. Dunaway and Marcella H. Dunaways' book *Study Smarter, Not Harder: The College Student's Guide to Success*. The Dunaways go straightaway into study tips basics and pre-exam prep.

The Next Literary Great: Your Notes

Do you ever puzzle over what perfect notes look like? I squint when I read study tip books that model oh-so-perfect lecture notes.

You see, note-taking gurus say, "Do the impossible": listen to lectures while mulling-over how to summarize—as if you're penning the next *Pride and Prejudice*. And then they tell you not to multitask. So, how do you write, think, and listen at the same time?

It depends on your learning style. I write fast and messy, capturing nearly everything the professor says. But I use abbreviations and math symbols as shorthand. I star important ideas and add question marks beside the confusing stuff. I sprinkle acronyms and mnemonics in the margins.

Some students write slowly and neatly. If that's your style, use shorthand abbreviations and math symbols. Do use stars, exclamations, and memory devices. But, pick-up your speed: don't miss key ideas. After all, you're taking notes, not crafting a calligraphy Christmas party invite.

Mark and Marcella Dunaway don't runaway without revealing note-taking tips and more:

- Whenever you watch a class lecture or video, take notes.
- If you get a print-out or handout, still take notes.
- When watching lectures, always have a pen and notebook ready.
- Use a notebook or binder — never rely on loose-leaf papers alone.
- If in a physical class, sit near the front. Top students sit in the first two rows.
- Use a computer to take notes if you don't need to jot down diagrams or pictures. But you're better off taking paper and pen notes. If you use a computer, keep a pen and backup notepad handy.
- Pick out the key points in the lecture. Don't write verbatim.
- Do use abbreviations, such as b/c for because, w/o for without, = for equals, and so forth.
- Write down whatever the professor repeats or emphasizes.
- Ask questions.
- Put away your cell phone and iPad. Keep distractions away.
- Participate in class; be a keener.
- Only miss a class if you have an emergency that you can back up with official documentation. (Work doesn't count as an emergency.)

Teach to Learn: Exam Prep

You're about to be quizzed on advanced math or French grammar. What do you do? You teach it before you get tested. Yes, find a student.

I would suggest your pit bull if you're in a pinch. But if your pit bull bites, then audiotape a lecture, make a matching PowerPoint, and post on YouTube instead.

Or, submit your lecture notes for sale on special sites. You could make three bucks every quarter year, just like my self-published Kindle book. But if that all sounds like work, then memorize by rote, acronyms, or mnemonics.

What's rote? Repetition. Less fun than making videos.

What's mnemonics? Crazy and wild images used for memorization. For example, you can remember the word "sycophant" by picturing a psycho ant flattering you while luring you into the Bad Ant Motel. (Psycho-ant sounds like sycophant.)

Mark and Marcella Dunaway give-away secrets to exam prep:

- Do not study during the last thirty minutes before an exam.
- While waiting for the test, do not seek out your friend, Ed, to discuss possible questions and answers. Ed may spin you into panic mode.
- Eat protein and sugar and drink coffee just before the exam.
- During the exam, heave heavy breaths and give yourself positive pep talks. If any negative thoughts arise, substitute them with positive ones.
- When you get the test, spot all the questions that you can answer. A confidence booster.
- Allow a five- to ten-minute buffer at the end of test to go over any missed or questionable answers.

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

Dunaway, Mark A., & Dunaway, Marcella H. *Study Smarter, Not Harder: The College Student's Guide to Success*. San Bernardino, CA: N.P. 2014.

From the PSE News Desk

What's making the news in Post-Secondary Education.



University Students on Mars. Researchers from McGill and Carleton universities are checking out how viable living on Mars might be. According to this [Global News article](#), students will be performing field work in California to analyse the suitability of sheltering in lava tubes—underground cavities left from volcanic lava—which are similar to lava tubes on Mars. This research project receives funding from the Canadian Space Agency, which receives its funding from the Canadian government, which, in turn, receives its funding from you.

AU-thentic Non-events Upcoming AU Closures

Athabasca University

Saturday, December 24 to Monday, January 2, inclusive. Edmonton and Calgary exam services re-open Tuesday, January 3, 8:30am MST. AU Information Centre resumes full service Wednesday, January 4, 8:30am MST. More info at: news.athabascau.ca/news/holiday-flurry

AU Library

Saturday, December 24 to Monday, January 2, inclusive. AU Library re-opens Tuesday, January 3, 8:30am MST. Order library materials by Monday, December 19 if you want them shipped before the holiday closure. More info at: library.athabascau.ca/page/ann

AUSU

Saturday, December 24 to Monday, January 2, inclusive. AUSU office re-opens Tuesday, January 3, 9:00am MST. More info at: www.ausu.org/event/holiday-closure



A Mistake

Several years ago I took funeral celebrant training from American Doug Manning and his daughter Glenda. It didn't seem that big a stretch from my work as a marriage commissioner. For more than twelve years I've officiated civil, non-denominational marriage ceremonies. That meant fulfilling a need and providing a service for couples, who for whatever reason, opted out of a traditional religious wedding.

It doesn't take much research to learn that traditional church funerals aren't meeting the needs of a significant number of families. Obituary after obituary announce that, based on the wishes of the deceased, a celebration of life is being held. That's where someone like me comes into the picture. To make it happen.

It hasn't been easy breaking into the market smack dab in the middle of church country but through funeral directors I get the odd referral. What sets celebrants apart from most clergy is our willingness to centre the service on the deceased as opposed to scripture and church traditions. I remember once actually timing how long it took for a priest to mention the deceased person's name---about forty minutes.

With fewer faithful churchgoers, the priest often doesn't know the person in the casket. The family is simply coming back to the church for the final goodbye. Often it seems as though it's a matter of [insert name here] in the template, sing this hymn there, repeat. In our church, the family can't deliver a eulogy unless they do it at the dinner following the burial.

That is not to imply criticism of the church or its practices. But it does go a long way to explaining why families seek alternatives. I recently spent a couple of hours with a grieving family. I got to see them cry and hear them laugh as we talked about how best to honour their husband, father, and grandfather. I went home to think, look for appropriate quotes, think some more. I pondered how to structure the program to allow for family involvement, to keep things flowing, to humanize and customize the ceremony, and to give this man his due.

This work tests my ability to empathize, to listen, to get to the essence so I can write, to organize, to speak in public, to show respect and compassion, and to bring comfort. It gives me the privilege of helping a family at a time of profound need. And I am grateful for the chance to do it.

What I find disturbing is the growing number of people who choose to do nothing to mark the death of a loved one. It may be a financial decision. It may be cynicism or a lack of belief. I hope they are at least, doing something privately. There is no escaping, avoiding, or delaying grief. A formal 'something' whether religious or not is a vital part of the grief process. To try to skip that step is a mistake, 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

The Mom's Plate

Dear Barb:

Hi, I am the mother of three children, ages fourteen, twelve, and eight. My husband and I both work full time and I take courses at AU. My daughter takes piano lessons and my son is in hockey. I am feeling so stressed out that I am yelling at my kids and my husband constantly. My husband tries his best to help but he has a demanding job and is often away on business. I end up feeling guilty all the time and that I am not a good mother. I'm sure there are lots of mothers that feel like I do and I'm wondering how they cope? Maybe I am doing too much. I have considered giving up working on my degree until the kids are older, but I love doing my courses; it feels like I am doing something for myself. I really need some advice! Thanks, from frazzled Laurie.

Hi Laurie:

You are right, I'm sure there are many moms out there who share your dilemma. Being a mom is the most difficult job in the world, and nobody knows this going into it. It starts out with this tiny baby who just lives for your touch and nurturing, then escalates into a two-year-old running around like they are the center of the universe, followed by the young child, who, for the most part, is pretty reasonable, except when you don't provide what they want when they want it. All this is to prepare you for the self-centered teens who know everything. This is the phase you are just entering with your oldest. As a mom, you should be careful not to lose touch with yourself. You not just a mom, you are a wife,

daughter, employee, and student just to name a few. It's important that you take time for yourself, even if this means getting up half an hour earlier in the morning to do yoga, or go for a walk, or just sit by yourself and enjoy a coffee. It is essential that you begin your day centered and well balanced, thus providing you with some resources to get through your day. Also, try to make your home environment peaceful, everyone will benefit from a little quiet. For example, spend an hour a day, possibly after dinner, where the TV and all electronics are unplugged. Encourage your children to read a book, or go outside and play. Your children will resist at first, but make this a part of their daily routine and eventually they will accept this as part of their life. Hopefully as adults they will have learned to live a more peaceful life. When you get really frazzled rather than yelling at your kids or your husband, which only makes things worse, try some deep breathing and self talk. Tell yourself this will pass, as all things eventually do. On the practical side of things, if you can afford to, hire someone to help with the housework or cooking. There are services that will provide fully prepared meals for families. This way you are still enjoying a homemade meal without all the work or expense of going out to a restaurant. There are many books you may want to read that can help with the mom overload including: *Be That Mom: Ignite Your Passion, Organize Your Life and Embrace Your Family!* by Tina O'Connor. *Life Skills Smart Moms Must Have: Proven Strategies to Keep You Sane!* By J. Rembrandt. Hope this information helps.

Follow Barb on twitter @BarbGod

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

Are they gone?

They're "gone," alright.

Listen, Emma, you have to be careful what you say around the Marginals.

Frankly, Dewey, your paranoia is really starting to get my ire up.

The Marginals are now occupying the administration building in San Bernardino. The grounds are turning into one huge urban campsite.

The Marginal leaders are negotiating with the Central government, but there are splinter groups who'd prefer not to negotiate.

I know how much you hate screens, but let me show you something, Emma.

The problem is, we don't always know who's who. Some of the pacifists have infiltrated the terrorist cells and some of the terrorists have infiltrated the pacifists. There's evidence of that even here on the Flotsam. Did you notice Serena's casual little avowal of solidarity with Alan?

Did I ever!

Well, she wasn't just whistlin' Dixie, Emma.

Forget the cello. I'm going in there!

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The Doppelgänger Cure, by Wanda Waterman



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IMPORTANT DATES

- **Dec 23:** January course extension deadline
- **Dec 23:** Deadline to book exam for Dec course end date
- **Dec 23 – Jan 2:** Holiday Closure (AUSU and AU)
- **Jan 10:** [Deadline to register in a course starting Feb 1](#)
- **Jan 10:** [AUSU Council Meeting](#)
- **Jan 13:** February degree requirements deadline
- **Jan 15:** Deadline to write exams for Dec course end date

Student Lifeline - Mindfulness

Give yourself a gift this month. Practice mindfulness.

Focusing your attention and awareness on the present moment -- which is what mindfulness is -- can help you manage everything from exam anxiety and holiday stress to family challenges and pressure at work. It can help you experience more satisfaction and joy in life, this month and every month.

Contact **Student LifeLine** any time, 24/7 at **1-800-567-2255 (TTY:1-877-371-9978)** to learn how practicing mindfulness for even just a few minutes a day can help improve health and well-being.

This is a FREE service for all AUSU members!

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:

Log in any time to <https://app.lifeworks.com> to access a wealth of online articles and resources, such as:

- [Practicing Mindfulness to Reduce Stress](#) podcast by George Mumford, who has taught mindfulness techniques to inner-city kids, prison inmates, corporate executives, and famous athletes.
- Infographics, such as [Brief Mindfulness Exercises](#) and [Mindfulness at Work](#), and articles like [Why Practice Mindfulness?](#), [Being Present as a Parent](#) and [Using Your Smartphone to Relax](#).
- Our [Mindfulness Toolkit](#), where you'll find a host of audio exercises you can practice at work, before meetings, or anywhere.

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

Student LifeLine

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Learn to focus your attention on the present moment, and you'll be better able to manage everything in life.

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User ID AUSU

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Help is at your fingertips, 24/7

Available on the App Store

ANDROID APP ON Google play

Get it on BlackBerry World

AUSU ATHABASCA UNIVERSITY STUDENTS' UNION

#igo2AU Contest Winner

In November, AUSU held the [#igo2AU contest](#) to get students more involved with AUSU, with a free AU undergraduate course as the prize! We are happy to announce that we received over 800 contest entries. The winner was chosen at random from among the qualified entries.

Congrats to **Jilian MacDonell** for winning the contest!

Congratulations

CLASSIFIEDS

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

THE VOICE

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