

# THE VOICE

## MAGAZINE

Vol 25 Issue 08 2017-02-24

### Minds We Meet

Yodelling with Sarah

### Speaker's High

A New Drug of Choice?

### Celluloid Psychology

A Split Decision

*Plus:*

*Council Connection*

*Kindness Like Confetti*

*and much more!*



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***The Voice  
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## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

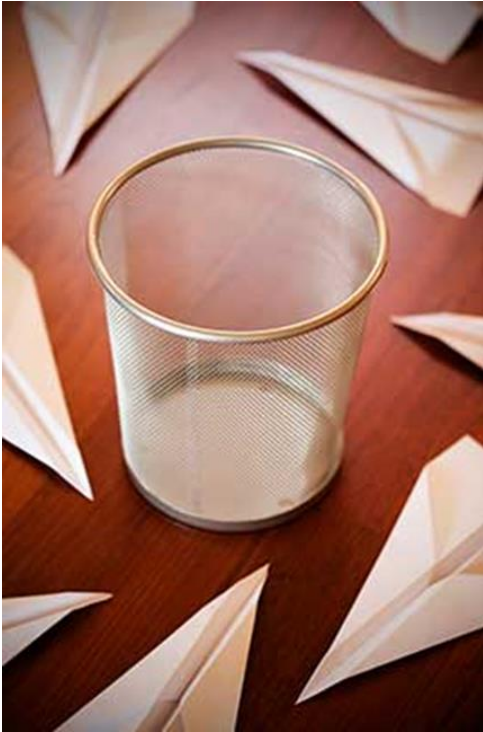


**We love to hear from you! Send your questions and comments to [voice@voicemagazine.org](mailto:voice@voicemagazine.org), and please indicate if we may publish your letter.**

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

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



**EDITORIAL****Karl Low****Admission of Interest**

We don't often think about admission issues here at Athabasca University, and why would we? The Open policy and distance model means that class rooms don't fill up, so extra people just means AU has to hire extra tutors. They don't even require extra office space for many of them, given as tutors, too, often work from home.

But this week, my attention got directed to an article in Maclean's Magazine about a student paper that had a years long court battle with the University of British Columbia (UBC) for access to the guidelines that UBC uses to determine what makes a potential student one that UBC will accept.

Which started me wondering, what kind of guidelines would a university like AU use? The question may not be as academic (heh) as you might first believe. After all, most brick-and-mortar based universities use limited admission to control the use of their resources. In their case, it's physical space. But when you think about it, physical space is something that can be addressed with sufficient money. If they had more money, they could build a new building and take in more students.

At AU, our sustainability problems are more direct. We simply don't have the money. But that difference, that lack of the middle problem, the physical space, may have been what allowed our institution to get here. When a brick and mortar institution can't pack in another student, they simply can't take that student. With AU, there's no obvious limit such as that to tell the university administration when we're past our growing point.

And at this point, enter the third-party review, mandated by the government. I haven't yet had a chance to speak with Dr. Coates directly (although I'm hoping to in the coming weeks) but, as an outsider, it's entirely possible he might see AU's Open policy as an open invitation to the troubles AU has been experiencing. Which brings me back around to my question. What kind of guidelines would a university like AU use? We could expect previous grades would be part of that, but given that our traditional student body still skews slightly older than brick-and-mortar institutions, perhaps more weight would land on experience. But would students from out of province, those who AU receives no funding for, be forced to meet a higher bar? And what of students from outside of Canada's borders. If you had to meet some sort of admission requirements for AU, would you still have enrolled?

I guess what I'm coming down to, is how important to you is the Open part of AU's mandate? Is it something you'd be willing to sacrifice if that meant you might get a higher quality of education and degree recognition? Let me know your thoughts, write me at [karl@voicemagazine.org](mailto:karl@voicemagazine.org), I'd love to be able to hear someone else's ideas on this.

Now, as to this week's issue? We've got a lot of material here, and a lot of good stuff. Whether that's our student interview with yodeller, fish kisser, and llama cloner (okay, maybe not all of those), Sarah Joseph; a look at the psychology in modern culture through a new writer's article, "Celluloid Psychology"; yarn-bombing; addiction to public speaking; a new instalment of The Travelling Student; or a meditative look at dealing with writer's block; this issue has a little bit of everything, including a report on the last Council meeting and the special Council meeting of January 31st—one which may have meant big changes for how AUSU works.

And I haven't forgotten our selection of events, news, and other bits of entertainment or advice you might need to keep you busily procrastinating. Enjoy the read!

# MINDS WE MEET



*Sarah Joseph is currently living in Calgary while attending AU. She's been from coast to coast and lived in several different areas, including the NWT, and harbors a not-so-secret love of comic books and fantasy video games, and a more-so-secret love of BuzzFeed "Which \_\_\_\_ are you" quizzes. She says she once won a yodelling contest during Oktoberfest, kissed a fish in Newfoundland, and successfully cloned a llama, but admits that only two of those things are true.*

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

I'm currently working part time for Alberta Health Services at an Ophthalmology clinic. So, if I'm not studying psychology, I'm checking patients in for their eye exams and diagnostic testing. I also spend what free time I can afford bingeing Netflix shows and table top gaming with a good group of friends.

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

My mom, she has a dental assisting diploma and a medical office certificate. With just those she's managed to work her way up the ranks to land not just a respectable position as an Analyst for Medical Affairs in AHS, but the admiration of her colleagues. She's very smart and quick to learn, but all the time she could have spent broadening

her education she instead spent working to provide for my brother and myself. I want to succeed for her just as much as I want to for myself.

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

George R.R. Martin. Mostly because I'm pretty sure I could order the Nacho Supreme and he wouldn't judge me for it. If he's not available, then Cleopatra – I'm a big admirer of her political prowess and am always looking for new makeup tips.

## **What would you describe as the proudest moment of your life?**

I was the first in my immediate family to graduate from college. Although it was only a two-year diploma, everyone made me feel very accomplished about seeing it through until the end. At my graduation, all of my family members came down to spend the night in the city I was studying in so they could attend my stage cross the next day. After I'm finished with Athabasca, I'll be the first with a university degree as well.

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

I won't lie, it's pretty great to roll out of bed and just start class in your PJs. Making your own schedule is also helpful. With that said, I do miss the classroom. I can't speak of other majors, but psychology classrooms are often buzzing with discussion, ideas, offhand stories, and real-life examples tutors and students have lived.

Online there's very little of that (unless you happen to take a class that includes an online discussion forum) and I think it's a big part of the learning process.

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

Probably more than I should admit. Last semester I struggled with working full-time and completing two higher level classes I wasn't prepared for. I had plenty of late nights wondering if I made the right decision, and whether or not it would be better to just withdraw and move on with life. Ultimately, I decided I needed to try to see it through, as I truly love psychology and believe the struggle pays off in the end.

**What was your most memorable AU course?**

I'm only about 45% finished with my degree so I don't have many under my belt, but I truly enjoyed Psychology In The Mass Media. It took a really in-depth look at how television, magazine ads, internet, and even radio influence our daily lives without many of us being any the wiser to it. Not that it's always insidious in nature, but I think the average person would be surprised by how much the media holds sway over their conscious and unconscious choices.

**What is most valuable thing in life to you?**

Self-love, I think. When you have a healthy love and respect for yourself a lot of other things start to fall into place. It's so much easier to form friendships, make healthy choices and see the value in struggle when the relationship you have with yourself is a healthy one.

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

I actually moved home to live with my mother so my rent wouldn't be back-breaking, and I could afford to work part-time and focus on my studies. There a times I find it difficult, of course. Being 28 and sharing a small space with a parent can feel a little stifling at times. But I know I wouldn't be able to pursue my dreams if I hadn't made that choice. My mom does her best to encourage me and so I'm slowly learning to swallow my pride and do what needs to be done.

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

I suppose I could suggest more classroom options for distance students, but that sort of defeats the purpose doesn't it? Though maybe being able to Skype in to lectures could be a thing. Honestly speaking every time I've had to contact someone at AU they've always replied promptly and offered as much help as they were capable, and that's what's most important to me.

**What is the most important lesson in life?**

I think the one people forget the most is basic respect. Everyone has their own epic story outside of the minor parts they play in your life, and it's important to remember that.

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

I slept on the streets of LA twice. Both times I was in lines for rock shows that were general seating. Both times were probably the most interesting and inclusive experiences of my life so far.

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

E-Text for SURE! I can carry like 15 e-texts around on my tablet, saved pages and all. No clumsy book markers or dog-eared pages. Have you ever tried carrying 15 text books in your arms? Not a good time.

**How do you find the tutors?**

So far they've been fabulous. If I've needed to reach out it's very rare I don't hear back by the end of the day, and never longer than two days. I find their critiques of my work honest and helpful without being condescending or coddling, which, in my eyes, makes for the best learning experience.

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

I've been all over Canada, and into the states on a few occasions. My favorite spots so far have been the beaches of Maui and the Haunted Mansion in Disneyworld.

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

*Ready Player One* by Ernest Cline

*The Bell Jar* by Sylvia Plath

*Weirdness* by Jeremy P. Bushnell

*Scott Douglas Jacobsen is an AUSU Councillor. He works with various organizations, and runs In-Sight: Independent Interview-Based Journal, and In-Sight Publishing.*

## Scholarship of the Week

### Digging up scholarship treasure for AU students.

**Scholarship name:** CHHA/CHHAF Scholarship, the Dr Charles A Laszlo Scholarship, and the Frank Algar Memorial Scholarship

**Sponsored by:** Canadian Hard of Hearing Association

**Deadline:** March 3, 2017, 3:00pm EST

**Potential payout:** \$1000

**Eligibility restriction:** Applicants must be hard of hearing, deafened, or oral deaf, Canadian citizens\*, and registered in, or planning to register in, a full-time program as of September 2017 at a recognized college or university. \*See full [eligibility requirements](#).

**What's required:** The online application form, which includes a series of personal questions relating to hearing loss, a maximum 1000-word essay describing your future aspirations, and two letters of recommendation.

**Tips:** Read the procedures on the application form carefully.

**Where to get info:** [www.chha.ca/chha/scholarships-index.php](http://www.chha.ca/chha/scholarships-index.php)

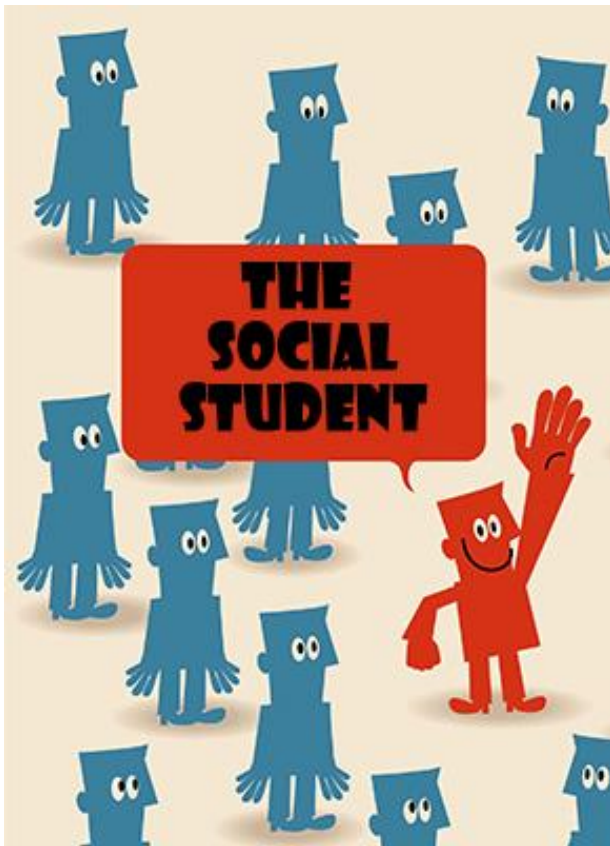




## The Social Student

Marie Well

### Monkeys, Chimps, and Research—in Outer-Space



Many academics craft surveys. You, too, will face a survey research assignment, whether as an undergrad enrolled in a research class or as a graduate student. And if you move on to a professorial position, survey research will strike you as vital as oxygen. So, get good at surveys now!

But are you stumped for how to send out your survey? Well, try using social media. With social media, you can make a full research survey campaign—with the help of monkeys and chimps. No, just kidding. Seriously, you can make your campaign with love from Facebook—and from MailChimp and SurveyMonkey. Best of all, Facebook and MailChimp are mostly free.

But does the thought of an online survey feel as frightening as being reborn in the body of Canadian Astronaut Chris Hadfield? Well, don't fear: if Chris can send social media from outer-space, surely you can send surveys from Facebook.

**If you're tech shy, use only SurveyMonkey for your research.** To send surveys, you'll first need to create one in SurveyMonkey. If you have more than ten questions (or need

more than a hundred respondents), you'll pay over thirty dollars a month for SurveyMonkey. Ouch! Plus, you'll pay more for SurveyMonkey to send-out your surveys—at roughly a dollar per respondent. Of course, if you've got a nice research grant, the costs won't stop you.

**But, if you're cost sensitive, use a mix of SurveyMonkey, MailChimp, and Facebook.** Maybe you want to avoid paying a buck for every respondent. Here's how you do that:

- First set up a Page on Facebook.
- Next, go to MailChimp and sign up for a free account.
- Then, in that MailChimp account, create an email sign-up form.
- Still in MailChimp, integrate that email sign-up form onto Facebook. (MailChimp has a Facebook integration option.)
- Give your form a title like "Sign up for my research." A tab will then appear on the left-hand side of your Facebook Page—with your title. When the user clicks on the tab—your email sign-up form appears.
- After users fill out your form, email them each a link to your survey. SurveyMonkey provides this link.

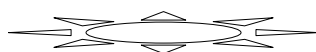
**Alternatively, use Facebook Leads Ads to feature a sign-up form.** If integrating a SurveyMonkey email log-in form into Facebook sounds about as easy as repairing a space station, don't fret. You can also build an email sign-up form directly in Facebook through a Leads Ad. To explain, if you want to capture the emails of people



interested in participating in your research, let Facebook create and advertise a sign-up form for you. Once people sign up through your form, you can download a comma separated values (CSV) list of their emails.

But, you'll eventually want to take your CSV list of emails and load them in SurveyMonkey. So, either way, that monkey will attack you—yes, another technology to learn. But, it's a free monkey—at least for less than a hundred respondents and less than ten survey questions. Once you exceed those numbers, the SurveyMonkey will fidget through your wallet with a diabolical plot—to buy-out Bulk Barn's supplier of organic bananas. Tame that beast.

So, make monkeys, chimps, and Facebook build you a successful research study. If screwing nails into a dislodged space-station door sounds less frightening, then you have the most to gain with conducting online surveys.



## Speaker's High

Barbara Lehtiniemi

Can you get addicted to public speaking?



I joined Toastmasters for the usual reasons, but ended up with much more than presentation skills. Toastmasters is an international organization that helps its members improve their public speaking and leadership skills. I wrote about my initial Toastmasters experience ("Public Speaking: Mastering the Fear", *The Voice Magazine* Nov 13, 2015) when I had attended only a few meetings. Since becoming a Toastmasters member over a year ago, I've found the benefits of membership extend far beyond the borders of speaking with confidence.

**Public speaking practice.** Delivering a prepared speech in front of a group of people represents more than overcoming nervousness. It's also about learning how to incorporate body movement and gestures, minimize the use of filler words (such as "uh"), and modulate your voice. I find I learn almost as much when I watch other members speak; I learn from their mistakes and get inspired from their successes. I used no notes for my second speech after being inspired by a more experienced speaker.

**Guaranteed approval.** Any time I speak at a Toastmasters meeting, whether it's a prepared or impromptu speech, or in a meeting role, I get instant feel-good approval. Fellow Toastmasters are there to encourage and support. Every speech is met with resounding applause. The applause is never perfunctory or forced—they are genuinely pleased that each speaker made the effort to get up and give of themselves. You simply cannot have a bad day at Toastmasters when everything you say is met with delighted applause.

**Writing practice.** Each prepared speech I make at Toastmasters starts with the written word. Composing a speech is good writing practice, which improves my writing skills for other formats. A speech has structure: an

introduction, a body containing several points, and a conclusion—similar to an essay. A speech also contains creative writing elements such as vivid language, rhetorical devices, and sensory descriptions. Some speeches may utilize humour or emotion, or be designed to instruct or impart knowledge. All this writing practice helps me become a better writer overall.

**Networking.** Toastmasters members represent varied occupational backgrounds and interests. Since I'm a recent arrival to the area, I'm still building a social and professional network and Toastmasters helps me meet people I wouldn't otherwise come across. Because members tend to speak about topics of personal interest, listening to their speeches exposes me to new information and ideas. And, because I work and study from home, Toastmasters meetings represent welcome social time.

Although many people dread public speaking, it's surprising how quickly the nervousness melts away. By speaking in a supportive environment like Toastmasters, many people find they look forward to giving their next speech. I felt nervous delivering my initial speech but after the first one was out of the way I felt eager to deliver the next, and the next.

Public speaking can become surprisingly addictive. Many Toastmasters members participate in speaking contests and look for other opportunities to practice their skills. There's a sort of "speaker's high" that comes with each successive speech. It's not just the approving applause—although that's gratifying. The high comes from crafting and delivering a speech that shares your interests with others, measuring your improvement with each presentation, and advancing toward a goal.

*For more information on Toastmasters, including speaking tips, go to <http://www.toastmasters.org/>.*

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



## Falling Asleep in the Room of Tiny Drawers (Minutes of a Guided Creativity Meditation)

**Wanda Waterman**



**Journal Entry 20 Feb/2017**

7:58 a.m. So blocked. Couldn't sleep worth a hoot last night. The day has just begun and already I'm exhausted. My novel's heroine, once so full of promise, is stuck in a happy marriage (what was I thinking?). I can't even come up with a first obstacle except for the clichéd widowhood, loss of a child, discovery of a terrible secret . . . How did the creative juices get so dammed up? Whither hast flown, like a flock of winter sparrows, all the wonderful ideas with which I began this project?

8:13 a.m. Oprah suggests I'd benefit from a guided creativity meditation, so here goes. Am now at the ready, phone turned off, door locked, headphones firmly on the noggin, and all tabs and windows closed except for Youtube.

8:14 a.m. It's night. I'm sitting cross-legged on the grassy bank of a stream, listening to the flowing water and looking up at the stars. (It's so tranquil here. The air smells like moss, and the starry sky is a glorious visual feast. Is it wood tick season here in Meditation Land? Will the grass stain my pajamas? Oops— must listen to the voice and do what it says. It's a tall order— I'm a writer, after all, which makes me very distractible. Shut up and listen, Wanda. Fooocus.)

8:17 a.m. The sun is coming up and the sky is slowly becoming lighter. The voice tells me to rise, turn, and walk along a little path that meanders through the tall grass to end at a large Victorian mansion with many windows. (Ah, there it is. It looks like a prison, kind of. No, it looks more like one of those girl schools Charlotte Brontë used to describe. No— what it really looks like is that old abandoned almshouse in Nova Scotia that we used to ride by every day on the schoolbus, a great hulking reminder of the horrors of Dickensian poverty. It was the only thing that kept some of us going to school, so terrified were we of following the fate of the unemployable. Marie Comeau, who lived nearby, said that at night you could hear the moans of the indigent old folks who used to live there. Come on, Wanda, focus, damnit!)



The Almshouse of Marshelltown, Nova Scotia,  
built in 1891 and closed in 1963

8:21 a.m. I'm to go inside. I recoil at the idea (why did I have to go and remember the almshouse?), but I change the look of the front door a bit to resemble that of a grand country manor, and go inside.

8:22 a.m. There's a large hall with walls decked in heraldry. (Way to flaunt your alleged superiority, upper class twits. The Watermans have a coat of arms, too, you know. It shows two suckling pigs standing up with apples in their mouths and holding a giant garlic bulb between them.)

8:24 a.m. I'm told to walk to the end of this hall and enter a door that opens onto a narrow corridor. At the end of this corridor is a large staircase, spiralling downward. I'm supposed to go down this staircase. (Seriously? Walking down to the basement of an abandoned house is going to relax me and bring me to a zone of imaginative freedom? Stop it. Trust the process.)

8:27 a.m. I descend the staircase, landing in a large room whose walls are lined with tiny drawers. The voice invites me to open a few and look inside. I'm not finding anything interesting— string too short to use, rusted bolts, empty pill bottles, and the like.

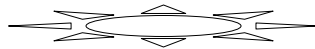
9:33 a.m. I wake up. Youtube has long finished the creativity meditation and has moved on to another meditation that promises to show me my spirit guide. The thought of meeting my spirit guide frightens me



more than did the prospect of entering an abandoned building, and besides, I'm dying to know what was in all those drawers. Did I eventually find one that contained something precious, mysterious, or revelatory? Was my novel's climax in one of those drawers? Or was I apprehended and taken to another room where I was tortured until I swore to uphold the Sovereign Magistral Order of the Temple of Solomon? This last suspicion is strengthened when I try to return to the creativity meditation and find that it has mysteriously disappeared.

10:00 a.m. I think I'll give my heroine a job in real estate. It'll be her task to find buyers for scary old buildings. The possibilities are dizzying.

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



## Throw Kindness Around Like Confetti

**Carla Knipe**



February is such a *meh* month. The memories of December's magic are about as stale as a piece of leftover fruitcake, the dark winter days feel like they will never end and spring will never arrive. If a mood-boosting tropical vacation is out of the question, what can you do to get out of the winter doldrums?

An internet search or a browse through the self-help section of a public library will reveal a whole host of suggestions. But one that often gets overlooked in the quest for self-care is the mood-boosting effect of random acts of kindness. You may be

surprised—and more than a little sceptical—about this idea. After all, random acts of kindness have become somewhat a cliché. But psychology is noticing the positive value of doing something for others with no ability to be thanked.

The psychology of altruism (yes, this really is a thing!) is being given some serious academic traction, especially because it resonates with how society deals with stress. The science behind altruism helps to explain why people volunteer for good causes, give charitable donations and it even attempts to scientifically explain why some people are just happier and more empathetic than others. Rather than just looking at the big picture of the effects of altruism on society as a whole, psychologists are also examining the ways that small and personal acts of altruism can benefit both the giver and receiver.

Although the cynical view suggests that altruism is born out of selfishness, that people are ultimately motivated to do things for others by measuring what is in it for them, the optimistic view takes a different path and one that scientists are just beginning to understand. The study of altruism is leading to some surprising "unknowns" about what makes people tick, and random acts of kindness is part of the growing body of research on the science of happiness.



The phrase "random acts of kindness" started out as a phrase coined by California writer Anne Hebert in 1982. She urged the world to practice "random acts of kindness and senseless beauty" as a rebuttal to the phrase "random acts of violence and senseless cruelty." But the concept has roots far further back than the 1980s. The Jewish concept of *mitzvah* is based on an act of kindness or goodwill toward others, something that carried over into Christianity. Eastern religions such as Buddhism and Taoism also incorporate concepts of doing good works toward others with no expectation of compensation. But it seems that some side effects of modern life are that people seem to be much more unkind to each other than they once were and that people are so conscious of the "rat race" that they are losing their connection with others. Perhaps this is the reason why people respond positively when they hear about others taking the time to be kind, and how the concept random acts of kindness has taken off to become entrenched in the modern psyche. Perhaps it is a modern equivalent of ancient religious concepts that resonate.

A quick internet search will bring up hundreds of ideas for random acts of kindness. But beyond paying for the next person's beverage at a coffee chain's drive-thru, or holding the door for someone, there are some ways to incorporate random acts that are gaining momentum and becoming movements in their own right. They incorporate creativity, encourage a sense of community, and are just fun to do.

### Yarn Bombing

Imagine walking down a street and coming across a park bench disguised as a crocheted afghan, or seeing a statue wearing hand-knitted socks, or stumbling on a bouquet of knitted flowers blooming in a park. These pieces of pop-up art are part of the world of yarn bombing, loosely defined as 3-D objects being repurposed as alternative graffiti. It started out as a gimmick outside a fabric store as a bit of advertising, then it caught on with knitters who wanted to use up the leftovers from their projects. While some municipalities treat yarn bombing as a menace in the same way as actual spray-painted graffiti, it is generally thought of as a way to inject a bit of humour and pleasantness in urban life. Yarn bombing has taken on practical purposes too; knitters leave scarves around light poles so that people in need can take them. Yarn bombing has also been used as part of political protests. June 11 is now designated as the International Day of Yarn Bombing. Find out more at <https://www.daysoftheyear.com/days/yarn-bombing/>

## AU-thentic Events

### Upcoming AU Related Events

#### AU Executive MBA Information Session - Regina

Monday, Feb 27, 5:00 to 6:30 pm MST

Delta Hotels by Marriott,

1919 Saskatchewan Dr, Regina SK

In-person

Hosted by AU's Faculty of Business

[business.athabascau.ca/event-details/athabasca-university-executive-mba-information-session-regina/](https://business.athabascau.ca/event-details/athabasca-university-executive-mba-information-session-regina/)

register online at the above address

#### Academic Integrity at AU

Tuesday, Feb 28, 5:00 to 6:00 pm MST

Online

Hosted by AU Library & Scholarly Resources

[library.athabascau.ca/orientations.html](https://library.athabascau.ca/orientations.html)

no pre-registration necessary

#### Executive MBA and the Business of Hockey Info Session

Wednesday, Mar 1, 10:00 to 11:00 am MST

Online

Hosted by AU's Faculty of Business

[business.athabascau.ca/event-details/executive-mba-business-hockey-info-session-5pm-mst-online-2-copy/](https://business.athabascau.ca/event-details/executive-mba-business-hockey-info-session-5pm-mst-online-2-copy/)

register online at the above address

*second session:* Wednesday, Mar 1, 6:00 to 7:00 pm MST

[business.athabascau.ca/event-details/executive-mba-business-hockey-info-session-5pm-mst-online-2-copy-copy/](https://business.athabascau.ca/event-details/executive-mba-business-hockey-info-session-5pm-mst-online-2-copy-copy/)

register online at the above address

#### AU Executive MBA Information Session - Saskatoon

Wednesday, Mar 1, 12:00 to 1:30 pm MST

Radisson Hotel,

405 20th Street East, Saskatoon SK

In-person

Hosted by AU's Faculty of Business

[business.athabascau.ca/event-details/athabasca-university-executive-mba-information-session-saskatoon/](https://business.athabascau.ca/event-details/athabasca-university-executive-mba-information-session-saskatoon/)

register online at the above address

[bombing-day/](#) and see if there is a community of rebel knitters near you.

### **Guerilla Gardening**

Take a scrap of neglected land—perhaps in an inner city or a derelict street corner. Get a group of people together, often under the cover of darkness, and stealthily transform that space into a beautiful garden for others to enjoy. This is what guerilla gardening is all about. Alternatively, another action is making "seed bombs" (recipes are available online) to throw like a grenade that will turn into a patch of flowers in an empty patch of ground that could use some brightening up. However, guerilla gardeners have faced opposition by town councils and housing associations that liken it to trespassing and illegal use of public land, to the point of taking such groups to court. If you do want to engage in this activity, it is a good idea to approach your town council to work with them and find out any guidelines and regulations of your area, such as agreeing on which plants would work well in your area (and not to introduce any invasive species by accident). To find out more, see <http://www.guerrillagardening.org>

### **Little Free Pantries**

You've likely heard of Little Free Libraries, but Little Free Pantries are taking the idea of free book boxes and expanding it to ad-hoc food banks. The idea is for people to place non-perishable food and toiletries in an accessible location so that anyone in need can help themselves, no questions asked. The idea is catching on worldwide, but many municipalities place restrictions on distributing food items, such as requiring permits, limiting locations to private property and requiring regular monitoring by health and safety personnel. Still, Little Free Pantries are enabling people to help the less fortunate in a tangible and practical way. Please see the official Facebook page for more information.  
<https://www.facebook.com/littlefreepantry/>

### **Random Notes of Kindness**

Imagine looking at the back of a washroom stall door or opening a book from your local public library and finding a hand-written note taped there that seems like it was written just for you and comes at a perfect time. While not a formal, organized movement, people are embracing the true random acts spirit and taking the time to spread some encouragement. The only requirement is that the note needs to be completely random, anonymous and kind. Other than that, it could be as simple or as elaborate as the writer wishes. Whether they are

## **AU-thentic Events**

### **More Upcoming AU Related Events**

#### **AU Faculty of Business Saskatoon Mixer**

Wednesday, Mar 1, 5:00 to 7:00 pm MST

2nd Ave Grill,

123 2nd Avenue South, Saskatoon SK

In-Person

Hosted by AU's Faculty of Business

[business.athabascau.ca/event-details/au-faculty-of-business-saskatoon-mixer/](http://business.athabascau.ca/event-details/au-faculty-of-business-saskatoon-mixer/)

register online at the above address by Feb 24

#### **AU Open House**

Thursday, Mar 2, 10:00 to 11:00 am MST

Online

Hosted by AU

[athabascau.ca/discover/open-house/](http://athabascau.ca/discover/open-house/)

register online at above address

*second session: Thursday, Mar 2, 6:00 to 7:00 pm MST*

#### **Doctorate in Business Administration (DBA) Information Session**

Thursday, Mar 2, 10:00 to 11:00 am MST

Online

Hosted by AU's Faculty of Business

[business.athabascau.ca/event-details/doctorate-business-administration-dba-information-session-5/](http://business.athabascau.ca/event-details/doctorate-business-administration-dba-information-session-5/)

register online at the above address

*second session: Thursday, Mar 2, 5:00 to 6:00 pm MST*

[business.athabascau.ca/event-details/doctorate-business-administration-dba-information-session-6/](http://business.athabascau.ca/event-details/doctorate-business-administration-dba-information-session-6/)

#### **Writing for Publication - Pearls and Pitfalls**

Thursday, Mar 2, 1:30 to 2:30pm MST

Online

Hosted by Athabasca University's Faculty of Graduate Studies

[fgs.athabascau.ca/news/presentations/](http://fgs.athabascau.ca/news/presentations/)

e-mail [fgseducation@athabascau.ca](mailto:fgseducation@athabascau.ca) to register

read or thrown away, it does not matter and the writer never knows what happens to the note. The point is that the intention was there to spread some joy. Some people take this idea further and wrap up a small gift to leave in a random location such as a bus shelter.

### Painted Rock Swaps

In the same spirit of random notes, people are taking the time to transform ordinary stones into mini works of art. Painted rocks have been around for a long time. Artist Lin Welford wrote a series of successful books on the art of rock painting. But now people are taking that a step further, and leaving these mini masterpieces in parks, on sidewalks and just about anywhere for people to find and keep or hide again. The painted rocks can range from simple doodles or positive words or sayings, to little paintings that would not look out of place on a large canvas. There are many organized rock swap groups around the world, but it's a great project for families and children to do as well. The only caution is to be mindful of the environment. Use non-toxic paint, use a non-toxic sealant, refrain from using glitter and glued-on materials such as googly-eyes that can come off and be consumed by animals or enter water supplies, and make sure you are not leaving rocks in restricted areas such as wildlife reserves or national parks. Other than that, this is a great way to get creative! If you need some inspiration, go to <http://www.linwelford.com> or search for the Facebook groups Rock Painters Anonymous and World Wide Rock Swap.

For further reading:

<http://www.giraffe.org>

<https://www.randomactsofkindness.org>

<http://www.kindspring.org>

*Carla is a Calgary-based writer who would love to give painting or drawing a try; perhaps after she completes her English degree through AU.*



### Celluloid Psychology Split

**Melanie Fuller-Brudersas**



*Split* is billed as a psychological thriller film starring James McAvoy, Anya Taylor-Joy, and Betty Buckley.

Kevin, the main character in *Split*, suffers from a condition called dissociative identity disorder (DID) involving 24 different identities. While he sees his therapist regularly, this does not stop him from succumbing to the "beast" inside him, and he kidnaps three girls as his sacrifice.

If you think this sounds like the stereotypical, frightening psychopath depicted in Hollywood movies, then you know why mental health professionals are damning this film. There are several ethical issues with how the film looks at DID. For example, the language Kevin's therapist uses to describe his condition to other professionals is filled with "us and them" terminology. "We look upon *them* as less than, but maybe *they* are so much more than *us*" states Kevin's therapist. Renowned cultural psychologist Sandra Collins claims this language

perpetuates the black and white categorical thinking responsible for overgeneralisations that perpetuate stigma and oppression. Additionally, Kevin's psychological disorder is unrealistically portrayed and exaggerated, as he is given the typical Hollywood maniac image: dangerous, unpredictable, and monstrous with intentions to hurt others. But we know that, in reality, most people who suffer complex disorders are harmless and fit none of these descriptions.

In spite of this, watching this film created a "split" within my conscience. On one hand, I noticed the obvious negative portrayal of mental illness, while on the other, I felt the film was an exploration of the human experience. I argue that this portrayal was intended to stir discussion and exploration on the topic of mental health.

Keep in mind, this film was written and directed by M. Night Shyamalan—the same man who directed *The 6<sup>th</sup> Sense*, *Unbreakable*, *Signs*, and others. He is known for making films with supernatural plots that have twist endings. This supernatural spin is also evident in *Split*. For example, Kevin and his therapist discuss "the beast" (his 24th identity) who Kevin claims can crawl on walls and crush things with unimaginable strength using superhero-like powers.

The film clearly portrays mental illness using fantasy, and thus, DID is not meant to be portrayed realistically, and the assumption made by the therapist, that Kevin can change body chemistry with different personalities, is unproven in reality. However, Shyamalan's use of fantasy is interesting, as this vehicle of artistic expression opens the door to explore complex issues in a creative way. For example, when Kevin becomes "the beast" he assumes powers similar to superheroes like Spiderman, Batman, or Superman. The difference between heroes and villains, however, is how they use their power. Therefore, this premise of using a super-hero fantasy enables the viewer to potentially conceptualise sickness differently. "We are what we believe we are" is the verse touted by Kevin's character shortly after becoming "the beast".

Like in superhero movies, the human struggle to overcome adversity is questioned. Some turn evil, some do not. So what is evil? The real issue in this film is that DID is depicted as evil, which can play on people's fears of mental illness. Both Kevin and Casey (one of the girls he kidnaps) suffered childhood trauma, however, she becomes the hero who survives Kevin's beast. While this is similar to the psychological debate over why only some people who experience severe trauma develop mental illness, *Split* incorrectly implies that a) a person who develops a mental illness is dangerous and b) the person who went through severe trauma can *choose* their outcome of mental health. Kevin laments "the broken are the more evolved. Rejoice"

Overall, I found the film interesting and thought-provoking. Is art meant to be politically correct? Or to be just an expression of explorative creativity? Are viewers truly passive to portrayals of mental health in films like *Split*? Should the artist be censored? Or is it the responsibility of those watching the film to make judgements that are not based on heuristic black and white thinking? It appears this film intentionally raises these questions in its use of the supernatural motif. As the main character states "We are what we believe we are". Perhaps, this film was intentional in creating a divide, or, "split" within the conscience of its viewers to question deeper issues.

*Melanie is a second-year Masters student studying Counselling Psychology at AU. She is fascinated by pop culture and uses a critical lens of examining its meaning in the context of modern psychology.*



## The Travelling Student On the Road Again

**Philip Kirkbride**



*Update: It's been a while since I've sent in an article about my travels while studying at Athabasca U. I've had a chance to travel lots more since then. With so much going on it became difficult to write. But I've taken an interesting path and have had a chance to serve on AU student council and am now working in the online education industry at a virtual high school. I hope to contribute more to The Voice in the coming months. Now back to the story:*

*My name is Philip Kirkbride. I'm a college graduate from Ontario with a bachelor's degree from AU. I've always wanted to do an exchange program or study abroad but never found the right time to do so. This is the story of how Athabasca University has allowed me to create*

*my own study abroad program. In the last instalment, we were driving up the east coast of Australia and stopped in the beach town Byron Bay for a night at the bar.*

Despite being hungover, getting up the morning after our night out in Byron Bay was relatively easy. Partly because we got out of the RV to see the shining sun reflecting on the beach water. As usual, Dylan woke up and walked around the beach taking photos with his 1980s camera. It was early but surfers were out, kids were going for a swim, and even a parasailer was on the water.

We drove up a large hill (small mountain) to the Cape Byron Lighthouse at the top. After finding a spot with free parking (not an easy task) we parked and prepared the RV's kitchen to cook breakfast in the scenic spot.

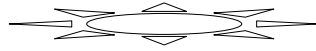
Dylan fried up some eggs and vegetables for an omelet sandwich and we ate, standing, with our plates resting on the railing at the side of the hill overlooking the water. Despite the looming deadline of having to return the RV in Cairns, we managed to forget our worries, enjoy our breakfast, and wander up the hill to the lighthouse. We even saw a strange lizard—like nothing I'd seen before—but despite looking hideously dangerous Dylan assured me it was mostly harmless.

After an hour at the lighthouse we returned to the RV for a very long day of driving. The views were stunning but the ride was an exhausting 10 hours. We drove north along Australia's East coast; there is definitely a gradual, but sometimes dramatic, change in the landscape you see as you travel this route. Between Byron Bay and Cairns the change is one of the landscape becoming more tropical.

While it was difficult to read or write anything for my classes as we drove up the coast I was able to find some relevant audiobooks that I hoped to cite for a class. The hard part is getting the hang of making audio bookmarks so you can get back to the part you need later on. It also helped to pass the long hours on the road so it ended up being a great strategy to do some light research for an essay.

After 8-10 hours on the road we reached our final spot. It was a place called Millaa Millaa Falls, just outside

Cairns. The day had been long, with lots of hours on the road. So long, that when we got to our final RV campsite for the trip it was completely dark outside. While it was a great place for photos, a bbq, or going for a swim, don't expect any lighting if you show up at midnight. Technically parking and sleeping in your RV at Millaa Millaa falls is not encouraged. Our plan was to get up early and act like early morning tourists when the park ranger came around. But as we fell asleep we had no idea whether or not we'd get a knock on our window.



## The Creative Spark

### Title Pages that Smile

Marie Well



Are you smiling? Well, even if you're not, your title page sure can—with some design love. A hot pink arc placed with upward edges can substitute for a smile any day. So, let's get happy and design you a title page.

But why waste your time on crafting colorful cover pages? Because, my friend, the more artistic your cover pages, the more creative you become in all other dimensions. Do you love playing guitar? Acting? Woodworking? Scrapbooking? Dancing? Writing? Applying makeup? Well, if you nodded your head even once, then your skills in any of these areas are, yes, transferrable—even intellectually transferrable. So, the better you are at doing the cha-cha, the better you become at pounding your fist while screaming eureka over an existentialist chat.

How exactly is creativity transferrable, you ask? Well, let's look at flow. Flow marks a vital feature in design. But doesn't flow also work in music, dancing—and essay writing? Yes! Even exam writing gets fun when you do it with flow.

Shapes mark another transferrable part of design. Singing takes shapes: hollow, puckered, round. Dance moves replicate shapes: remember the 70's band dancing the letters YMCA? Your essays take shapes too. And essay outlines can mold into shapes that break away from uniformity, taking on all kinds of crazy-brilliant structures. For instance, each subtopic in your essay can branch out in its own unique pattern of sub-subtopics, asides, solid evidence, opaque reasoning, triangular proofs, or circle-backs.

But remember, you first need to *understand* the rules to effectively break them, barring for beginner's luck.

Jim Krause's book *Design Basics Index* poses tips for design; I turn these tips into smiles on your prof's face.

**Connect images to type with imaginary straight lines.** In other words, if you add an image of the famous thinker statue, then imagine a line extending horizontally where the statue's elbow meets its lap. Put your title on that line. Or put your title on an imaginary line extending from where its fist meets its face.

**Use grids. Grids give pleasing structure. But, break the rules for fun.** In Microsoft Word, you can use columns or grids. Sadly, MS Word's grids don't readily have something called a gutter. No, I'm not referring to the gutter

that showcased your Smarties box as the cement dried when you were a tot. Instead, I am referring to the thin space between columns: gutters.

So, use the MS Word's columns feature instead as it gives you gutters.

But break the rules! Perhaps try extending an image beyond a column's borders. To do this, first create a textbox. Then, insert an image inside the textbox. You see, textboxes can go wherever they please and the image will follow—like an unleashed Pitbull walking its owner.

But, only use multiple page columns for non-essay projects—and get the prof's approval beforehand.

**Make your image flow into the direction of your title page text.** If you feature a picture of Plato running off the page, don't place him running toward the left-hand side of the page if your text is on the right-hand side of him. That is, unless your title is, "Study Plato? Run in the opposite direction!"

In other words, have Plato running toward your text—unless you deliberately want to create tension.

**Flow left-to-right to show fast, forward motion. Flow right-to-left to show slow, backward motion.** If you are doing a paper on the de-evolution of Blackberry, use a left-facing image of a jogger holding a Blackberry: slow and backward. If you are doing a paper on the evolution of Apple iPhones, use a right-facing image: fast and forward.

**Color can reinforce shapes and themes.** So, explore MS Word Wingdings fonts. If you come across a picture of a heart, maybe color it blue to represent a broken heart. Or if you come across a picture of a hand signaling stop, color it red—or green for thematic tension.

*So, what transferrable skills did you get after reading this article? Well, ideally, you're now a better dancer, singer, woodworker—and student. Even your nail-art, tattoo, or nose jewel can make you gifted at extrapolating Plato. A paradox? I call it a creative spark!*

## From the PSE Newsdesk

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

**Student action results in Sustainable Development success.** A three-month campaign by Laval University student activist group "ULaval sans fossiles" helped persuade Laval U to stop investing in fossil fuels. In a [February 15, 2017 press release](#), Quebec City's Laval University committed to "taking responsible action to switch its endowment fund investments in fossil energy to other types of investments, such as renewable energy." ULaval sans fossiles organizer Alice-Anne Simard describes her group's winning campaign, and offers suggestions for other student activist groups, in a [February 20 article](#) on Ricochet Media.



## Canadian Education News

Scott Jacobsen



### American Secretary of Education nomination a concern for Canada

According to [The Tyee](#), the recent nomination of Betsy DeVos as the secretary of education for President Donald J. Trump's Republican Administration could be a concern for Canadian education, and citizens.

DeVos has "spent years wielding her inherited wealth to aggressively support the replacement of public schools with charter (private) schools, paid for by tax-funded vouchers." The author of the article, Crawford Kilian, claims DeVos is "utterly unqualified for the job," and that her appointment became possible because United

States educators have failed to explain the purpose of public education.

Kilian suggests that, since Canada is no different, our own system of public education is vulnerable as well.

### Koostachin makes it to Canada's top 150 Canadians

Based on her exemplary work and advocacy for equality in First Nations schools on reserves, [CBC Sudbury](#) has reported that Shannen Koostachin has been placed among the top 150 Canadians. Shannen was a young activist from Attawapiskat First Nation who spoke openly about deplorable conditions for aboriginal students in terms of the schooling, and the schools themselves, on First Nation reserves. She died in a car accident in June of 2010, at the age of 15.

The Attawapiskat First Nation, in Ontario, was Shannen's experience. She brought the experiences to Parliament Hill in 2009 with the demand for the federal government of Canada to "provide better, safer schools for students living on reserves." Her dream is now "known as Shannen's Dream."

### PHE Canada and The Co-operators aim to improve mental health literacy and wellbeing in schools

"Physical and Health Education Canada (PHE Canada) and The Co-operators are proud to announce a new partnership that will support mental health literacy and improve well-being in school communities across Canada."

There is the online portal and "community of practice" called Teach Resiliency, a PHE Canada initiative, which is to offer tools to enhance student and teacher mental health. According to research, approximately 20% of Canadian students suffer from mental illness, and that "Twice as many Ontario teachers feel stressed all the time," in comparison to the general workforce.

Teach Resiliency will launch in May, 2017. Brian Storey, President and CEO of PHE Canada, said, "We are thrilled to partner with The Co-operators whose support will allow for the continued evolution of the program and impact in school communities across the country."

*Scott Douglas Jacobsen is an AUSU Councillor. He works with various organizations, and runs In-Sight: Independent Interview-Based Journal, and In-Sight Publishing.*



## So This is Thirty.

Deanna Roney



I think there are often expectations, landmarks we are supposed to hit by certain ages. We should graduate high school by 18, university by 22, then marriage, and kids before 30. While this is rarely the case anymore, it can still be difficult not to measure your accomplishments by this perceived scale of success. As most students at Athabasca University know, completing an undergrad degree is a worthy endeavour, yet it is not always possible to do it in the order that the scale suggests. Most students at AU are mature students.

I think we always have this belief that by the time we turn 30 we are going to have it all figured out. We will be secure in our careers, happy with where we are, and creating a life for ourselves that somewhat fits into those expectations. Attending AU showed me how bizarre that scale of thought is. It is a wonderful gradient for those who follow it, but it is certainly not the standard—nor should it be. The students I met (both virtually and in person) showed me how amazing it is to have a passion for something and to follow it regardless of what anyone else might think—regardless of how out of sequence it may be.

I never would have imagined that I would be starting an internship at 30, that I would still be finding my way and working toward something. But, I have found my passion, and I have found something that I don't mind working until midnight on. I learned through AU that you need to be open to new ideas, to opportunities that you maybe never expected, or never knew would exist. I learned to take pleasure in what I was learning at the moment and not to get too far ahead of myself. Looking at the final 400 level courses, when I was taking my first one, they seemed daunting. Looking at the final essay question when I first started a course, it seemed impossible. But when I got there, I continued through it. They all came with their challenges but by the time I got there I had the tools I needed to succeed.

So, what will come of this Internship that I am starting by all accounts much later than "normal"? I can't say, but I will do what AU taught me to do: I will focus on what I am being taught, I will absorb as much as I can, and I will be open to new opportunities.

I was always given the impression that turning 30 would be a "big deal" that it would be a hard birthday. But for me, it is a new beginning. I am on a road I am extremely happy to be on. I am finding my own way and slashing a trail through the woods creating my own timeline, scale. I have a wonderful support system to cheer me on when I get tired, or sharpen the blade when it dulls.

*Deanna is an AU graduate who loves adventure in life and literature. Follow her path on the writing journey at <https://deannaroney.wordpress.com/>*



## **Council Connection**

### **January 31 and February 16, 2017 Council Meetings**

**Bonita Arbeau**

The past few weeks have been busy at AUSU. Council held a special meeting on January 31, in addition to the regular meeting on February 16, and I attended both to bring you all the details.

The meeting on the final day of January was called to vote on a new location for AUSU's office in Edmonton, Alberta. AUSU has been leasing an office space in downtown Edmonton at Energy Square for several years and paying a hefty annual price of \$54,000. However, this lease expires in April, and AUSU's executive director has been searching for several months for an adequate, but less expensive option. With the current economic climate in Alberta, council anticipated that they would now be able to obtain a much cheaper lease. AUSU Executive presented three options for council's consideration:

- A smaller office in the same building for \$38,719 per year;
- An office at Nexus Business Park (7 km away) for \$34,287 per year; and
- An office in West Edmonton (12 km away) for \$18,743 per year.

The meeting was tense. AUSU staff made it clear that they wanted to stay in their current building and went so far as to say that all three in-office staff might leave AUSU if the office was moved to West Edmonton. One staff member insisted that a drive to West Edmonton would add five to ten hours of travel time for her each week. Staff preferred the downtown location because of carpooling arrangements and the perks at Energy Square, such as a bright office space with large windows, heated underground parking, and a 24-hour security guard, which they felt important given the late nights staff often spent at the office for council meetings. They also liked downtown for its close proximity to the post office, AUSU's lawyer's office, auditor's office, and the AU exam center at Peace Hills Trust Tower three blocks away, as well as other amenities such as coffee shops and restaurants.

With AUSU's strained budget in mind, President Shawna Wasylyshyn and VP External Julian Teterenko were in favour of the cheapest alternative: the location in West Edmonton. At less than half the price of Energy Square, they felt the West Edmonton location seemed adequate for AUSU's needs, especially considering that the office is rarely visited by students. Shawna stated that although the space may be aesthetically less pleasing than the current building, it was safe, secure, and large enough for staff to be comfortable there. She also emphasized that council has an obligation to manage membership contributions responsibly, and she was uncertain AUSU members would support paying for an office space with features that AU's own offices do not have, such as free underground parking. She also pointed out that AU had made an offer to host AUSU's offices for free, which had already been rejected after considering the staff implications, so staff desires were being accommodated. It was noted in response, however, that this free location would have been at AU's main campus in the town of Athabasca. Other councillors were coy about their preferences and seemed unwilling to voice their opinions in public.

After 45 minutes of debate, council voted to go in camera, and all non-councillors (including staff) left the meeting. An hour and a half later, we re-joined the meeting and learned that council would vote by secret ballot to sign a lease for the West Edmonton office. In a moment of serendipity, Councillor Brandon Simmons, who had been absent for the two hours of deliberations, arrived seconds before council voted, providing the extra vote that enabled a four-four tie. With a tie vote, the motion was defeated. This process was repeated in a vote for the office at Energy Square, with the same result. VP Finance and Administration Kim Newsome argued in favour of the Energy Square lease by noting that losing valuable staff would cripple AUSU's goals for the year, that the wishes of staff should be given priority, and that it likely meshed better with longer range plans of AUSU.

if it begins sharing space once again with AU. Councillors Robin Bleich and Brandon Simmons agreed. After several more unsuccessful votes for the various options and with no end in sight, Shawna announced that she would change her vote to approve the lease to stay at Energy Square, as she did not want Executive or staff to spend any more time or energy on the matter. Council then approved this lease with a vote of six to two.

The new lease at Energy Square will be for three years, after which time AUSU will look at sharing a location with AU, whose Edmonton lease will also expire at that time. In the meantime, however, with all alternatives for reducing regular expenses exhausted, AUSU has indicated that they will be looking at the option of increasing student fees sometime in the near future to balance their budget.

The next meeting, AUSU's regular council meeting, held on February 16<sup>th</sup>, was a change of pace from the previous meeting. Most of the meeting was occupied by typical (dare I say, yawn-inducing) business, but there were a few interesting moments.

First, AUSU's new social media strategy was presented, which is an internal operational document that will guide and track progress toward increasing membership engagement and improving communication. The document established guidelines and targets for engaging with members on various platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, AUSU's mobile app and website, as well as the welcome e-mail that each new member receives. The Joint Council/Voice Action Plan committee's final report added an action plan to the previous document with four interrelated parts: editorial autonomy and management parameters, content development, marketing, and the Voice's website. Each of these action plans will require significant work by the Voice's managing editor, Karl Low, as well as input from a "student focus group." Without much discussion, council approved both documents. They then passed a motion to thank and dissolve the Joint Council/Voice Action Plan committee.

After an update on council's progress toward their annual goals, council reviewed its policy revisions for February. Most were minor changes, but there was an interesting debate about if and when councillors should be penalized for failing to respond correctly to e-mail votes. In light of council's high turnover in recent years, this discussion was both enlightening and disheartening. Councillor Robin Bleich provided the background for the debate; she had mistakenly responded to an e-mail vote by replying to a single councillor instead of the entire group. Considering she is a new councillor, this error is understandable. Or so one would think.

Instead, council penalized her, citing policy 2.16 which states that "failure to participate" in an e-mail vote will result in a one-third absence on the councillor's record. Two full absences within a 12-month period will trigger a vote of removal from council. Robin could presumably prove her "participation" by showing the date and time of her e-mail, but council gave her no consideration. A lengthy discussion ensued about how many exceptions to this rule should be allowed, under what circumstances, and what specific wording should be used in the policy. AUSU's longest-serving councillor, Kim Newsome, wanted no exceptions to ensure that all councillors participate in the e-mail votes.

This punitive approach may seem paternalistic. On the other hand, council cannot legislate for every possible event, and arguably, they shouldn't try to. Policies are simply meant to guide council's actions and provide direction, but council is responsible to interpret and apply those policies in an appropriate manner. Legislating for every scenario removes the human aspect, and undermines the value of competent leadership. In addition, it could make councillors feel undervalued, while unnecessarily complicating policies with rules for one-off situations. AUSU's executive director suggested that council pass a motion to recognize the situation and save Robin from being penalized. However, the majority of council decided that the policy should explicitly state what to do in this circumstance, should it happen again. With a vote of five to one, an additional line was added to the policy that allows for a "lifetime maximum" of two exceptions if and only if a councillor fails to reply to the correct group e-mail address.

Lastly, council's monthly reports provided insight into staff, committee, and AUSU Executive activities for the month. Work on AUSU's bylaws continues, and a final draft is expected to be presented to council within a month or two. AU is planning to start rolling out student e-mails in April. The Finance Committee wrote off a debt of \$375.50 from a former councillor after unsuccessful attempts to collect the money, while AUSU is still trying to contact over 70 students who are owed health plan reimbursements.

The next AUSU Council meeting is scheduled for March 14<sup>th</sup> at 5:30 pm MST. If you are in the Edmonton area, I encourage you to drop by AUSU's office at Energy Square on 106 Street NW and meet the wonderful staff there. They are hard at work on your behalf every day, and I'm certain they would love to meet you!

### Women of Interest

*"Any girl can be glamorous. All you have to do is stand still and look stupid."*  
- Heddy Lamar.

**Heddy Lamarr** was born November 9, 1914, in Vienna, Austria-Hungary and died January 19 2000, in Casselberry, Florida, USA. She was a famous actress and an inventor who began her career in 1933 as an actress in the controversial film "Ecstasy", where she is seen swimming and running in the nude. She continued working in films until the 1950's and became a huge star. Lamarr was known for her breathtaking beauty on the screen, however, she was an inventor at heart. One of her earliest inventions was a tablet that, when dropped in water, created a carbonated drink. Later she teamed up with composer George Antheil and they created a jam proof radio guidance system for Allied torpedoes. Their design system would continually change signals so that the torpedoes were able to avoid detection. Today this design is used in Wi-Fi, CDMA and Bluetooth. In 2014 Lamarr and Antheil were inducted into the National Inventors Hall of Fame.

Additional information about this unique woman can be found at the following websites.

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hedy\\_Lamarr](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hedy_Lamarr)

<http://www.women-inventors.com/Hedy-Lamarr.asp>

<http://www.uh.edu/engines/epi435.htm>

## Student Sizzle AU's Hot Social Media Topics

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

### AthaU Facebook Group

Tom wonders if there is an official AU Facebook page (answer: yes! [www.facebook.com/AthabascaU/](http://www.facebook.com/AthabascaU/).) Isabella seeks advice on referencing Google images in a presentation. Jennifer asks for info on the ProctorU exam request procedure.

Other posts include 2016 tuition tax receipts, appealing grades, Mexico, and courses BIOL 235, ECON 247, INST 430, MATH 215, NUTR 331, and PSYC 435.

### Twitter

[@AthabascaUSU](https://twitter.com/AthabascaUSU) (AUSU) tweets: "Free online course to help you become a better online learner courtesy of [@AthabascaU](https://twitter.com/AthabascaU) - <http://bit.ly/1Tbr7pa> #disted #AthaU."

[@AthabascaUBiz](https://twitter.com/AthabascaUBiz) tweets: "Reminder! We've extended the [#ExecutiveMBA](https://twitter.com/ExecutiveMBA) application deadline to the end of February - still time to apply! <http://business.athabascau.ca/mba>."

[@AU\\_Press](https://twitter.com/AU_Press) tweets "ICYMI: Arthur Bear Chief spoke to [@cbcbooks](https://twitter.com/cbcbooks) about writing about being a residential school student: <http://ow.ly/2r5r3094YMC>."







### Finish First

My mom, Roy, and I just collected on a Christmas present from Hilary. She gave each of us a ticket to the Garth Brooks world tour concert in Edmonton. I don't think anyone expected he'd end up selling more than 143,000 tickets in nine shows but that's what happened. Ours was for the seven o'clock show on Saturday night

We were there in 1996 when Brooks last came to Edmonton and we loved him. Hilary saw him last year in Saskatoon. Much has been written about his talent, his showmanship, his nice-guy-down-home persona.

That Hilary was able to secure four PCL Loge seats at the spectacular Rogers Place made this event special. These seats are mid-bowl and feature a table and four barstool seats. No aisle, no small-bladder people squeezing back and forth because they've been drinking fifteen-dollar drinks all night. Great sightlines, comfy setting, no annoying people.

Because my mom is eighty-something and I'm still gimpy because of my fall, the plan was to drop us off as close to the door as possible. The traffic was snarled and one street was closed so we bailed out when we could so Roy and Hilary could park. The sidewalk was jammed—ten or twelve people wide in two directions from the door and around the corner—with chilly, confused concertgoers. You've got to wonder about men in shirts and women in short, sleeveless dresses wearing open-toed shoes in February in Edmonton.

The issue, it seems was moving nearly 20,000 people from the 3 PM show out so the next 20,000 could get in and through security for the 7 PM show. We didn't see any anger. Near us, some guys broke into song. Unfortunately, *Jeremiah Was a Bullfrog* isn't a Garth number. They seamlessly transitioned into *Friends in Low Places* and made us smile at the plucky Canadian spirit and loyal country fan base.

The show started about an hour late with two warm-up acts. When Garth burst onto the stage, he said he'd be 'playing cowboy songs, drinking songs, and the night would be one of oldies.' He had us eating out of his hands. Some people stood through the entire night. We all cheered and sang along whether he

prompted us or not. He teased us, he enabled us, he praised and challenged us. And the crowd lapped it up. It was a feel-good night in a time of too many worries for too many people.

After the obligatory standing O, Garth returned alone with his guitar and performed another twenty or more minutes. It felt natural, comfortable, intimate despite our number. It was so the opposite when years ago we saw Dwight Yoakum perform. He appeared drunk, low energy, inconvenienced to be here. But of course, stars behaving badly is not new.

So chock this one up as a night of memories shared by three generations and facilitated by a generous daughter/granddaughter. It's also nice to know that good guys can finish first, 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*

## Just Friends and Finances

**Dear Barb:**

***My wife is spending money like crazy! She is running our credit cards to the max and our bank account is always in the red. I'm a saver. I hate debts. We are arguing constantly about money and it is ruining our relationship. I feel like cutting her off from the bank accounts, but she works and contributes to the household, so I don't think that would be fair. How can I get my wife to stop spending money that we don't have? Thanks for your advice, Matthew.***

Hi Matthew:

I'm happy you realize you cannot cut your wife off from the bank accounts. If she works and contributes she has an equal say in how the money is spent. The best advice I can give you is for you and your wife to set up a budget. It's important that you do it together. Decide how much spending money you each will have and how much you will spend on groceries, household items and personal toiletries etc. Setting up a budget is just the beginning, you have to revisit this budget weekly to make sure that you are both still on track. This way you will be able to catch any overspending right away. It is important that each person has their own money to spend as they choose, so they will feel they have some personal control. Try this route for six months and if things are still going off the rails, then it might be a good idea to see a credit counsellor. Best of luck Matthew.

**Dear Barb:**

***So I have a rant, ready? This is about girls and guys being friends. So many people say that guys and girls can't be just friends. I disagree. I have a handful of good girlfriends and probably two handfuls of good guy friends. These guy friends I would never have any other relations with other than friends. I seem to have more in common and get along better with the guys. Most like the same things I like which are derbies, cars, mud, and living life a bit on the edge. They make you laugh harder and sometimes give better advice. I don't have to go shoe shopping with them or get mani-pedis (I'm not a girly girl). So no this does not make me a whore or anything else but a friend. Besides guys are less annoying than girls! So trust me when I say "WE ARE JUST FRIENDS!" Why can't people stop making judgements and accept that girls and guys can just be friends? Thanks, Jenn!***

Hey Jenn:

Great question Jenn! You make a good point and I guess the only thing I can say is that there is always the possibility that the friendship could cross the line, but on the other hand a relationship between same sex friends can also cross the line. It's your decision who you want to be friends with male or female. Don't be bothered by other people's opinions, even when there is nothing to talk about people will always be able to find something to say.

*Follow Barb on twitter @BarbGod*

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



*The next day in the holochamber . . .*



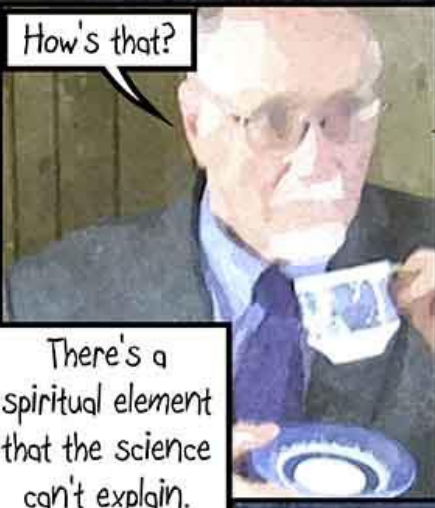
Feels like good-bye.



It's not. Remember I came from you.

I know. But there was something so healing about having myself out there to talk to.

You're more than a computer program, Doc.

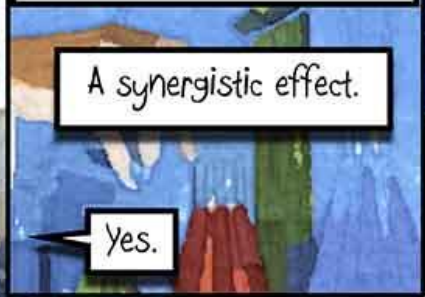


How's that?

There's a spiritual element that the science can't explain.

Nor can I. Let me just say that sometimes when you bring the right parts together they create—

A synergistic effect.



Yes.

So if you add four cups of memories to two cups of psychological training and mix lightly, you can cook up a spirit guide based on your true self?



Not quite. It took many hours of therapy with you to connect with your true self and employ it in your healing process.



Does that happen with every patient?



No. You were the first.



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

## IMPORTANT DATES

- **Feb 28:** [Deadline to apply for course extension for April](#)
- **Mar 10:** [Deadline to register in a course starting Apr 1](#)
- **Mar 14:** [AUSU Council Meeting](#)
- **Mar 15:** [April degree requirements deadline](#)
- **Mar 31:** [Deadline to apply for course extension for May](#)
- **Apr 10:** [Deadline to register in a course starting May 1](#)
- **Apr 11:** [AUSU Council Meeting](#)

## What Qualities Should AUSU Executive Have?

AUSU is having an Executive Election at the end of the month in accordance with [AUSU Policy 3.02](#). All three executive positions will be re-elected from among the existing elected council.

Although Executive elections are internal, we would still like to hear from our membership about what qualities you value in your AUSU executive!



Email [ausu@ausu.org](mailto:ausu@ausu.org) or text 780-900-0908 to let AUSU know what qualities you would like to see in the AUSU Executive!

## Course Evaluations

Completed any AU courses in the past year? Please fill out an AUSU Course Evaluation online [here](#).

AUSU's course evaluations are available anytime. Also, although they are completely confidential, you can see the evaluation results online as well! The more evaluations receive, the more useful the information is!



## Tuition and Taxes

You may be able to reduce income tax payable by claiming tax credits for tuition and academic fees.

The [Tuition, Education, and Textbook Amounts Certificate \(form T2202A\)](#) will be available to all eligible AU students in the [myAU](#) portal at the end of February.

Visit AU's web site [here](#) for further details on obtaining your tuition, education and textbook tax credit information for your 2016 tax return.

To find out more about claiming education costs on your tax return, visit the Canada Revenue Agency website [here](#).

## Advocacy

One of AUSU's most important roles is to provide Advocacy for AU undergraduate students. AUSU advocates on behalf of all students at the provincial and national level, but we also provide advocacy at the University level, both on an individual basis and on behalf of all students.

**If you are experiencing issues at AU that you would like assistance with, please feel free to contact us at [admin@ausu.org](mailto:admin@ausu.org).** AUSU can advocate on your behalf, or to provide you with information to assist you in your communications with the University.





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# CLASSIFIEDS

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Classifieds are free for AU students! Contact [voice@voicemagazine.org](mailto:voice@voicemagazine.org) for more information.

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## THE VOICE

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