

THE VOICE

MAGAZINE

Vol 25 Issue 15 2017-04-14

Minds We Meet

Interviewing Students who are AUSU's new VPFA

A Splash of Cash for Undergrads

Don't Miss Your Chance!

The Pineapple Principle

A Serious Issue, Dividing People.

*Plus:
The Fit Student
The Mindful Bard
and much more!*



CONTENTS

The Voice's interactive Table of Contents allows you to click a story title to jump to an article. Clicking the bottom right corner of any page returns you here. Some ads and graphics are also links.

Features

Minds We Meet: *Interviewing the New AUSU Executive!*..... 6

Articles

Editorial: *A Little More Conversation* 3

Splash of Cash for Undegrads..... 10

The Pineapple Principle 12

Considerations..... 16

Columns

The Fit Student: *Smarter* 9

The Creative Spark!: *Shout Out or Smooch* 13

The Mindful Bard: *Before it's Dark* 14

From Where I Sit: *Do the Little Things* 18

Dear Barb: *The Costs of Education* 19

News and Events

Scholarship of the Week..... 8

AU-Thentic Events 11

Women of Interest 17

Student Sizzle..... 17

AUSU Update..... 21

Graphic

All The Music Be Happenin' Now 20

***The Voice
Magazine***

www.voicemagazine.org

301 Energy Square
10109 – 106 ST NW
Edmonton AB
T5J 3L7

855.497.7003

Email
voice@voicemagazine.org

Publisher

AU Students' Union

Editor-In-Chief
TBD

Managing Editor
Karl Low

**Regular
Contributors** Hazel

Anaka

Barb Godin

Scott Jacobsen

Barbara Lehtiniemi

Carla Knipe

Deanna Roney

Wanda Waterman

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

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

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

The Voice does not share
its subscriber list with
anyone. Even I don't look
at it. It's all on auto.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR



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

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

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

EDITORIAL**A Little More Conversation****Karl Low**

Last week, Dr. Neil Fassina, President of Athabasca University held a 90 minute town hall meeting over lunch on Tuesday at the Edmonton Chamber of Commerce. Students were invited to attend both in person and by teleconference, so I popped by virtually to hear what was being said. The meeting seemed to be well attended, with a number of different voices asking questions and making comments. If you didn't attend, I'll give you a brief rundown of some of the most notable questions I heard and their responses.

The meeting started with Ric Harlan, the VP Advancement for AU, welcoming us and introducing Dr. Fassina, who gave a short set of opening comments about his joining AU, and his hopes and vision for the future of the school. In his eyes, AU is poised to be leading the way in the changes that are currently happening with education. Everything that traditional universities are just starting to deal with, AU has been dealing with for the bulk of its existence. He also wanted to point out how he was looking at this town hall meeting to be akin to episode 1, season 1, of a new series, "where we're just opening the door to the people who are core to AU, our learners."

He pointed out that while there's been a lot of public attention on some of the challenges AU is facing, that's all they are, "challenges", and he feels that AU's strengths and opportunities far outweigh the challenges AU is facing. This positivity was something he retained throughout the meeting, but at this point, he opened it up to the audience to ask what it was that makes students proud to be at AU.

The first person to speak was a student calling in from Abu Dhabi, which, to me, was just kind of cool as an example of how far AU can reach. The student pointed out that the ability to interact with the course materials at your own pace, as opposed to being forced to absorb it during a 90-minute lecture or after waiting half a day in line to speak to the instructor personally during office hours was one of the primary reasons he was currently with AU. However, he had a number of concerns he noted including one that later seemed to become almost a theme of the townhall: AU's use (or lack thereof) of modern technology, both for course materials such as video lectures, and for exam communication and invigilation.

The student also noted that with AU's model, it should be seeking accreditation in many countries, such as the UAE where he was currently studying from.

Dr. Fassina noted that many in the room were nodding as the problems with AU's technology were brought up, and said that while the point is well taken, and taking advantage of technology is "absolutely front and centre about what AU needs to do", but that the context we are operating in is so much different than it used to be, as the technologies available for learning almost go through a cycle of becoming regularly obsolete. So rather than just worry about catching up he also wants AU to look beyond to what will be coming down the road next.

He also acknowledged that international options are one of the major opportunities that AU has, and while many universities are striving to create some sort of international experience for their students, so that students

can get different lenses through which to view the world, AU has that advantage almost naturally, with its far-flung cohort being able to create such experiences for every learner without them ever having to leave their home community. He also noted he would be happy to explore the point of becoming recognized in the UAE and other Gulf areas.

The next question also revolved around AU's use of technology, specifically in their user interface, and how modern interfaces are designed for mobile use. Again, Dr. Fassina noted that AU's opportunities are beyond just building for the now, but in preparing for the next. "Five years ago" he said, "internet ready was all about optical line. A physical infrastructure that gets signal from one point to another, it all had to have a wire, and AU has diligently prepared for that, but in the meantime, the rest of the world has leapfrogged that technology and instead moved directly to high-speed wireless and cellular. Market penetration of mobile devices is nearing 100% in some areas, so one of the questions he and AU's faculty are already dealing with are how do they set the content up to take that leap forward, into mobile friendly apps, so that when you're looking at your phone on the bus, you're able to meaningfully study, and beyond that, how can AU get ready for the next iteration, the next leap in infrastructure, whether that's cell-tech, low-orbit satellites, or who knows. Fibre-optic is great for today, but his thought processes are how do we get beyond that to whatever is coming next?

"Right now, today," he pointed out, "the largest provider of online asynchronous learning is Microsoft through LinkedIn" (via their ownership of lynda.com, which all AUSU members have free access to). People have gone from searching for information in libraries and navigating the dewey decimal system to searching first google, and then YouTube, and so is there a way that AU can become a provider of authoritative information for simple questions that people might search out on sites like that, and, if it can, to then have that information lead people to consider taking full courses at the university?

Another area of concern that was noted was that of graduate studies. A student was completing their Master of Health studies, but there was no room at the Doctoral level after that at AU. How can AU hope to compete against universities like the U of A because it seems to have so few research programs.

Dr. Fassina suggested that some of this is in the context. AU is a fairly new university in the graduate space, but its programs there have been expanding exponentially, and he wants to make sure AU has the systems in place to support future graduate work. With those systems in place, the question then becomes what does the population need? He wants to be sure that AU isn't just opening up graduate opportunities that duplicate other offerings already out there if those are already sufficiently being taught. And then on the research side, the question becomes exactly what areas does AU want to specialize in. There will never be an Athabasca University Hospital, he pointed out, because such a structure simply wouldn't make sense for AU, but the important thing is to find out what AU can excel at being in the business of teaching.

**Hey graduate students,
don't forget to download
the AU app for even
more chances to
network, set up study
dates, ask questions,
stay in touch with your
AUGSA council, and
more!**

A suggestion was made that AU wasn't leveraging the researchers it had well enough. As AU has some world-renowned researchers who are researching and teaching there, but even the students who have those researchers as their tutors may not know the depth of knowledge at the other end of the line. Concerns were also noted that AU needs to maintain it's services to be accessible to students with disabilities.

Some people on the line from the Calgary office asked if there was any further comment that could be made about the state of funding for AU, since it has been in the news lately.

The situation, suggested Dr. Fassina, is not as dire as the news has made out. An expected budget deficit of over 3 million dollars, for instance, has been turned into an actual deficit of just over half a million. Staff and faculty have all been going out of their way to mitigate the risk associated with deficit funding. AU is also, he noted, remaining deeply involved with the government of Alberta's examination of new universities funding models to make sure that funding for AU is fair and equitable with other universities in the province, something that, currently is not at all the case. He also noted that other universities are also looking for ways to diversify their funding sources, and AU is at a particular disadvantage because of the four traditional lines of revenue (Government, Tuition, Philanthropy, and Ancillary Services), AU really only has access to three of them, as ancillary services means things such as parking, restaurants, renting out halls and lecture spaces, all of which are items that are difficult or impossible for AU to pursue profitably. Even with that, he wanted to assure students that steps are and will continue to be taken to make sure that nobody ever questions the sustainability of AU. "It will take a few years to do so, but it took a few years to get to this point, so it will take a few years to get out, but it's the focus of the entire management team."

He then went further and noted that in just two and a half years, AU will be celebrating its 50th Anniversary, and his goal is to make it so that by that anniversary, nobody will ever need to question the financial stability of the institution again.

The last question posed noted that while there's been a lot of talk about technology and how there are opportunities to use it to improve, AU has been supposedly concentrating on that for a long time already without a lot of progress to show for it. And if the university is in a tight budgetary situation, what are the trade-offs that are going to be needed to support this technological development?

Dr. Fassina's answer, in brief, was that this was essentially the question that defines his job. And so the answer is what his job over the next years is about.

That essentially brought the discussion to an end, with everybody thanked for choosing AU, and Dr. Fassina noting that being able to discuss the opportunity and challenges ahead of AU with the very people who are being affected by those right now is both humbling and a distinct honour.

Personally, I thought the meeting went well, and while no concrete answers were given, those at the meeting seemed satisfied that the concerns and questions noted had been at least heard and understood, and as was noted at one point, "It's good to hear that you've been thinking about this and what it means." Personally, I'm a bit of a cynic, and so while the words were impressive, and seemed to be what people wanted to hear, I find myself wondering what actions will eventually come from this. But it's still early days, so we'll see.

In the meantime, this week, our feature is an interview with the AUSU's new VPFA. What brought him to the position and what does he hope to do with it? Read the latest "Minds We Meet" to find out. We also have a look at how you can get your hands on some of the \$15,000 that AUSU is looking to give away in its awards program, creative advice for your essays, a serious discussion about pineapple on pizza, scholarships, events, news, reviews, and some thought provoking and insightful pieces, such as why you need a surge protector on your computer.

Enjoy the Read!



MINDS WE MEET



I recently spoke with AUSU's new (as of April 12) Vice President Finance and Administration, Scott Jacobsen, about some specific motivations and ambitions for his first term as an AUSU Executive. Scott is completing the third year of a general studies program at AU, and he has been an active member of AUSU council since April, 2016. His favorite course at AU so far was COMM100: Introduction to Research and Study Skills; it set the foundation for a successful approach to academia. Scott is a researcher, an avid volunteer, and a writer who resides in Langley, British Columbia with two cats, two dogs, and a bird. The love of his family and a wonderful group of "elder friends" inspires him to give back to the community in any way he can.

Why did you decide to run for the position of VPFA?

For some background, prior to the election, I was a member, as a councillor, on each AUSU committee concurrently for several months, and the chair of the Awards Committee too. I enjoyed it. With the new position, these roles will change, with novel duties and responsibilities as the Vice President Finance and Administration. My experience and role preparedness seemed more instantiated with the experience in each relevant domain through committee experience over time. I wanted, or needed, to feel more responsible in the decisions being made.

That is, the VPFA position requires more time, experience, and skills, such as 30 hours or more per week, extensive knowledge of the bylaws and committees, ways to manage and take part in meetings or committees in a proactive, constructive, and assertive manner with the maintenance of respect among and between the meeting or committee members - even in disagreements, and so on.

The main consideration came weeks prior to the executive election. I wanted, or perhaps needed, external evaluation from individuals with the relevant experience and knowledge, or expertise. It seems more responsible to ask individuals with more expertise than myself—and to deter possible self-deception about personal abilities, interpersonal skills, knowledge, readiness, and talents. Sarah Cornett, B.Sc., C.A.E., the [former] executive director of AUSU, Julian Teterenko, vice president external and student affairs of AUSU, Kim Newsome, [former] vice president finance and administration of AUSU, and Shawna Wasylyshyn, president of AUSU, when independently asked, affirmed preparedness for me.

They work with me. They know the position. They understand me. I trust them. I work well with them as a team. Considering the comprehensive experience with the AUSU Committees, further reflection on personal and professional readiness, and affirmation, encouragement, and open support from the current ED, VPEX, VPFA, and president of my personal and professional preparedness, I went forward with it.

What unique perspective will you bring to the role?

I interview students. I interviewed an interim president and the current president of AU, and some AU staff. I wrote articles and education and science news briefs. I take part in a research group. I reviewed papers for IEEE through the research group. I take full-time classes. I took part in all the [AUSU] committees, including the temporary and special ones, to expand knowledge of the university, the student union, and fellow students. My experience and domain of competencies expanded in scale and scope, and precision.

What would you personally like to accomplish at AUSU over the next year?

To the thrust of the question, I see two domains. So for short answers: one, the fulfillment of tasks and responsibilities associated with the VPFA role; two, the expansion of the original initiatives for advocacy of students, especially student engagement within the constraints of the position's responsibilities. A longer answer is many know the difficulty of student mobilization in an electronic environment. The online platform provides opportunities in expansive reach but difficulties in socio-emotional detachment from the learning environment.

My original statements when elected as a councillor remain the same. "I will focus on student involvement and research...student involvement, this is a concern for AU. This means advocacy, communication, and governance." I said, "...undergraduate research, this is another concern at AU...For me, the core issue revolves around the possibility to involve students with research to continue their pursuits into graduate level accreditation...We're here to learn, to grow, and have a little fun in the process. I found this for myself. I would hope to convey and provide this for others too."

Also, I noted the legacy in development of the organization and student life in the largest online university in Canada. One person, or executive, or councillor, does not make a community. Therefore, the big goal remains fulfillment of duty, oath, and responsibilities in an honorable and respectful way; one honorable and respectful to the past, the present, and the future – with the long view. In the panoramic view, my tenure on council and in executive will seem small, but [it is] important to succeed and perform the relevant duties as best as possible. My work and vision will take place in this context - to fulfill duties and engage with students.

In particular, can you identify one area of AU/AUSU advocacy that is important to you?

Numerous domains remain concerns for me. One perennial area for AU/AUSU advocacy - as many know - comes from the electronic means of communication with, dissemination to, and education of AU current and prospective students. It comes in the form of a question, "*How* can students stay, or even be more engaged with AU/AUSU?" An even deeper question I ask, "*Why* do students come to AU for education over other postsecondary institutions?" In an aspect of the why, the how emerges, the answer appears multipronged. It requires persistent effort over 1- to 5-year time horizons.

And what would be your approach to increasing student engagement?

That's not easy in the knowledge economy, in the 'Global Village,' made of an electronic environment with current and prospective students, faculty, staff, administration, and so on, each with valid, important concerns for the institution. I see student engagement as one area, but [it] requires the community at large because this seems like Russian dolls - a Matryoshka nesting. I don't see a sole solution for one of the central issues for AU: student engagement. The AU/AUSU advocacy remains nested in relationships of various strengths and types. Happily, this AU/AUSU advocacy seems important to most active members of the AU community.

What is your vision for the Voice in one years' time?

My vision for The Voice Magazine in one year: development, maintenance, outreach; the development of capacities to service student needs and voices as much as possible. The maintenance of the increased capacity and development insofar as this seems reasonable within employee energy, finance, and time constraints. Outreach to more students as *the* student magazine. Most postsecondary institutions have a magazine or a newspaper. It seems important to me, but to develop, maintain, and reach out to students as much as possible does not seem like an easy task—but doable, I trust.

If you're a student reading this, I would love to hear from you: vpfa@ausu.org.

Bonita is a 3rd year bachelor of commerce student at AU, a mom-of-three, a political junkie, and an impassioned tennis fan, who just so happens to enjoy attending AUSU council meetings in her "spare" time. You can follow her on twitter @BonitaRenee88.

Scholarship of the Week

Digging up scholarship treasure for AU students.

Scholarship name: The Loblaw Scholarship

Sponsored by: The W. Garfield Weston Foundation and Loblaw Companies Limited

Deadline: April 28, 2017, 3:00pm EDT

Potential payout: \$1500

Eligibility restriction: Applicants must be a citizen or permanent resident of Canada, must be enrolled or planning to enrol in an undergraduate degree program at a Canadian university or college in Fall 2017, must have achieved an average of 70% or greater in the previous year of study, and must participate in volunteer activities. (You do *not* have to be employed by Loblaw to apply.) See full [eligibility requirements](#).

What's required: A completed online application form, which includes details on your volunteer activities, a 200-word essay describing how your post-secondary studies will help you achieve your career goals, and a 500-word essay describing how you demonstrate excellence in your everyday life.

Tips: Check the [FAQs](#) for extra information and read the [Terms and Conditions](#) carefully.

Where to get info: www.loblawscholarship.ca/



The Fit Student Smarter

Marie Well



Are you a B or C student, dreaming of A's? Or do you simply want to get smarter? In either case, you'll benefit from Dan Hurley's book *Smarter: The New Science of Building Brain Power*. Hurley challenges the recent notion that brain-smarts stay the same. Yes, research now indicates you can get smarter.

We know we can get more fit. When I hit the gym after a lazy lifestyle, my muscles didn't pop-out on day-one. Instead, I pushed and pulled heavy weights for five hours a week over a three-year span. After four months of training, I looked in the mirror horrified, "Tarzan Photoshopped in a bra!" But after three years of ever-increasing weight intensity, my muscles filled-out nicely: any clothing item I put on looked great.

But once I stopped training, the muffin belly reappeared.

We also know we can get healthier by choosing nutritious foods. I once guzzled coffee while starving myself. I looked like a pregnant femur bone. Now, I eat lots of spinach, carrots,

broccoli, apples, nuts, green tea, whole grains, fish and chicken—on a limited budget. Studies highlight benefits of healthy eating, including reduced risk of disease, lower blood pressure, and better digestive systems.

But, you can't see those benefits in the mirror.

We now know that washing our hands improves our health. But, at one time, people thought hand washing was irrelevant to health. We also now know that teeth improve with brushing. Imagine if we didn't brush? Our teeth would rot. But, at one time, people didn't brush.

These days, some advocates say your eyesight improves through eyeball exercises. The advocates say that rotating your eyeballs in circles, or staring at your index finger while moving it toward and away from your nose—and other exercises—help improve your vision. These advocates also suggest glasses act as mere crutches that do nothing to prevent age-related eye deterioration.

But many naysayers think eyeball exercises are useless.

Yet, researchers now believe that we can get smarter. But until recently, the view was that intelligence remained fixed—unchangeable.

So, Dan Hurley, author of *Smarter: The New Science of Building Brain Power* uses himself as a guinea pig to see if brain training spikes intelligence. But, let's focus on some of the tools he considers using to increase his smarts: namely, first-person shooter games, Posit Science, Lumosity, and exercise. Hurley documents the following:

- Research suggests that first-person shooter games help improve peripheral vision, visual attention, speed, and accuracy. Evidence also shows that shooter games improve vision. Medal of Honor is one example of a first-person shooter game. First-person shooter games seem to make you visually better.
- Posit Science offers computerized training for people with severe cognitive disorders such as brain injuries and schizophrenia. Over 50 hours of Posit training can improve working memory in these patients. Modest gains also occur in memory, attention, and problem solving skills. Posit Science might make you a bit brighter.
- Lumosity offers cognitive training with a model that goes beyond Sudoku and crosswords. Research suggests that Lumosity's computerized games improve memory, verbal fluency, and problem-solving ability. Sharper memory and clearer thinking also occur. Research indicates that Lumosity makes many mentally sharper.
- People who exercise "at least once a week performed 9.8 percent faster, solved 5.8 percent more math problems, and had 2.7 percent better spatial memory than those who never exercise" (p. 51). Exercise surely spikes your smarts.

Research suggests that two other ways to up intelligence may include learning to play a musical instrument and meditating, says Dan Hurley.

So, hit the gym, shoot some bad guys, and pick-up that learn-to-play-piano-visually book. And, for the skeptics, roll those eyeballs—for better vision, of course.



Splash of Cash for AU Undergrads

Barbara Lehtiniemi

AUSU will be splashing out \$15,000 in a few weeks. Do you want some?



May 1 is the deadline for the next round of AUSU scholarships, awards, and bursaries. With only a couple weeks to go, it's time to start looking at which awards you qualify for. Most AUSU award applications require you to gather information and documents together. An early start means you won't be scrambling May 1.

Here's a snapshot of each award; for full details visit AUSU's [Scholarships, Awards & Bursaries](#) page:

Academic Achievement Scholarships (2 at \$1000 each.) This one is a snap to apply for: fill out the online application form, upload a recent AU transcript preview, and you're done. The awards go to the two applicants with the highest GPA over the past 30 AU credits.

Balanced Student Awards (2 at \$1000 each.) Are you juggling AU studies with a job, and/or family commitments and/or community work and/or whatever? If you can squeeze in time to write a minimum 300-word essay

describing how you make it all work, this award could be yours! You'll need two reference letters; check the application form for details.

Returning Student Awards (2 at \$1000 each.) Were you away from formal studies for a while before starting at AU? Has it been tough? Tell AUSU all about it in a minimum 300-word essay and you could walk away with \$1000. You'll need to supply information about your education since high school; check the application form for details.

Student Service Awards (2 at \$1000 each.) Do you do volunteer work? Provide details of your volunteer activities in either point form or essay style (minimum 300 words) and you might see some money for your efforts. You'll need a reference letter from a volunteer supervisor; check the application form for details.

AUSU Bursaries (5 at \$1000 each.) In a financial crunch? If you can demonstrate financial need, AUSU might help you out with some extra cash. You'll have to provide lots of financial information, so check the application form carefully and get started early.

Single Parent Bursaries (2 at \$1000 each.) Are you a single parent with dependent children at home? Tell AUSU all about it in a minimum 300-word essay and one of these awards could be yours! Usually only one Single Parent Bursary is awarded each award cycle, but there were no eligible applicants for the November 2016 award and it was carried forward. The application requires detailed financial information, so check the application form carefully and get started early.

To qualify for any of these AUSU awards, you need to have completed at least 12 AU credits, and have a minimum GPA of 2.00. (Some awards have steeper requirements; the Academic Achievement Scholarship and the Single Parent Bursary both require at least 30 AU credits completed.) Read the [awards application form](#) carefully for full requirements.

AUSU has two award cycles each year; the other deadline is November 1. Additionally, AUSU has bursaries available year-round: the Computer, Emergency, Health Care, and Travel Bursaries. Be sure to check out the details for those, too.

For complete details about AUSU's spring splash of cash, go to the [Scholarships, Awards & Bursaries](#) page, located under [Services](#).

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

AU-thentic Events

Upcoming AU Related Events

Writing an Abstract for a Conference

Wednesday, April 19, 1:00 to 2:30 pm MDT
Online

Hosted by AU's Faculty of Graduate Studies
fgs.athabascau.ca/news/presentations/
e-mail fgseducation@athabascau.ca to register

Bannock and a Movie "People of a Feather - Part 2 of 2"

Friday, April 21, 12:00 to 1:10 pm MDT
Athabasca University, Peace Hills Trust Tower,
12th floor, Room 1222,
10011 - 109 Street, Edmonton AB
In-person; limited seating
Hosted by AU Centre for World Indigenous
Knowledge and Research
indigenous.athabascau.ca/documentation/People_part2.pdf
Register by phone (780)428-2064 or e-mail ivyl@athabascau.ca

The Pineapple Principle

Tara Howse



Does pineapple belong on pizza? Iceland's president, Gudni Thorlacious Johnneson hates the topping so much he wishes it outlawed. Thanks to the Internet, and all of our social media feeds, the comment went viral, tweets abounded, and memes were made.

Obviously intended as a joke, news outlets quickly grabbed the catchy headline and the Internet went wild in protests both for and against the topping. A staple of many students' diets, pizza is the cheap and quick meal we have while we study for exams or work on that paper last minute, and I thought it worth looking into the debate.

I was surprised to learn that the Hawaiian pizza, despite its name, originated in Canada in 1962. Sam Panopoulos of London, ON conceived and created the idea according to a 2015 Atlas Obscura article. More surprising to me is the heated and decisive debate that surrounds the Hawaiian toppings. Full disclosure, I love Hawaiian pizza. More specifically, I love pineapple on pizza, and have been known to add pineapple to homemade pizza even without the excuse of ham. I have one friend (that I know of) who sits on the "hates" side of the pineapple debate. I don't know if this is reflective of our Canadian tastes (and values) or perhaps I have subconsciously

un-friended those who dislike pineapple on their pizza, either way, I am quite surprised at the vehemence people have expressed over this seemingly benign discussion.

Ham and pineapple are complementary (as evidenced by the annual Easter ham), but adding it to a crust elicits heated opinions. What *are* the concerns with the topping? A quick Internet search brings up articles on BuzzFeed, Quora, Tumblr, and Huffington Post (to name a few). It has to do both with the moisture resulting in a soggy crust and the taste pairings between the sweet fruit and the mild mozzarella. I will cede that sogginess can be an issue, but any quality pizza maker will tell you it's necessary to squeeze and drain the liquid off the fruit (whether it's freshly cut or canned). As to the flavour pairings, I am flabbergasted, since, as noted, I'm a fan of the taste and always enjoy a sweet-and-salty combo. Writing this article has me now wondering whether the naysayers hate all fruit on pizza and, if that's the case, how does tomato and tomato sauce stand up to this line of thinking? Additionally, if people dislike the cheese and fruit combo, why are cheese boards (including heated cheeses such as Brie) so common?

Steve Green, publisher of pizza industry magazine PMQ, released a statement arguing in favour of the topping: "Being against pineapple pizza is like being against Santa Clause. There's really nothing that won't work on a pizza." Not to be overshadowed, the haters have their (very loud) opinion shared by none other than Gordon Ramsey with his explicit belief that "You don't put fucking pineapple on pizza."

Luckily, the pineapple appears to have enough support that it won't be disappearing off the menu anytime soon. I believe it's time to place a pick-up order now. What toppings will you be having this evening?

Tara Howse is in the BPA - Criminal Justice degree program with AU. With aspirations to continue her education, she is looking into AU's Master of Arts - Integrated Studies degree.

The Creative Spark!

Shout Out or Smooch

Marie Well



Are dry, dull essays necessary? Only if you're in law school. But if writing your essay sucks the color from your face, then shout out or smooch. Yes, treat your essay-writing like an audition for a blockbuster role. In other words, if your essays get dull, shoot them up with anger and passion.

And treat your essays like friends. In other words, compete with them. Challenge them. Change them—for the better. But who defines "better"? You do, of course.

Michael Shurtleff (in bold below) shows you the ropes of readings in his book *Audition*. I ready you for the writing in my follow-up musings.

When your script reading sours, blame your acting partner or plant a smooch. Similarly, when your essay-writing sucks, take it out on the authors you cite—or

shower them with love. At the very least, your writing gets a shot of emotion.

Better yet, throw blame *and* plant a smooch—do both in either order. Forget the dull essay. Polish that C paper by combining opposites: blame and love. For example, praise the passionate argument of authors cited, and then blame them for their lack of judgement. In other words, gush and blame to up your grades.

If you can't find a motivation for your character in the reading, then make the motivation the desire to change your partner. If you can't find a "So what?" reason for a quote you cite, then make the "So what?" the desire to change the cited author's view. In other words, if you can't find any meaningfulness behind a citation, ditch it or challenge it.

Be specific about the things you want to change in your audition partner. Similarly, be specific about the changes you want in the cited author's views. For instance, if you think psychology textbooks should humanize people with disorders, then say how to do so specifically. For instance, you could say psychology textbooks should advocate for a "colleague" relationship—not an authoritarian one—between psychologists and their patients. Be specific.

Don't act cozy, comfortable, and laid-back with your on-stage friends. Friendships have underlying competition—that's partly how friends help you grow. Display your competitive streak with authors you cite, too. If you agree with a theorist, then do a one-upmanship on her ideas; challenge or stretch her views.

Your friends won't mind a challenge, and if they do, then you've created tension, which audiences love, says Michael Shurtleff. Friends are rarely nothing but cozy; so, spice your essays with a competitive flare.

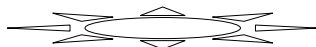
Ignore stage directions. If an overambitious playwright gives direction like "she sighs sadly," ignore it. Instead, insert how you would react, given your life experiences. If an author you cite says he or she is enraged by, say, automation in the workforce, that doesn't mean you need to feel the same way. Instead, insert your

personal views. For instance, perhaps you're optimistic about a company aiming to one-up automation by merging human brains with computers.

But do brains merging with computers sicken you? Then, own your feelings. Shout them out. (Personally, after seeing the benefits of a metal-on-metal hip, I think computerized brains sound a tad friendly.)

So, don't follow stage directions; follow your gut—even if one day it's made of metal.

A paradox? I call it a Creative Spark!



The Mindful Bard

Before It's Dark

Wanda Waterman

Speedy Johnson's Album Debut: A Musical Labyrinth of Surrealist Jollies

Album: *Before It's Dark*

Artist: Speedy Johnson

Released: April 7, 2017

As much as I hate to make comparisons, there is a musical tradition, harkening back to the sixties at least, of which Speedy Johnson's music forms a welcome addition: It's like listening to drunk people when they start making up their own songs, with just as much potential for flashes of insight.

The task is to make such songs intelligent while hanging on to that rawness through the processes of songwriting, practicing, revising, and finally the recording of a song. In the murk of the mumbling and meandering singing style and the wealth of original musical ideas a rare

beauty arises out from time to time, illuminating the transcendent subject matter. We've heard this with The Incredible String Band, Captain Beefheart, Tom Waits, and, more recently Ronley Teper.

Does it have a name as a genre? I haven't heard of one yet so I'm going to have to make one up: "Oracle Haus." My humblest apologies to all implicated. (I don't feel quite so guilty for naming the genre when I see Speedy's music described on a website as "Pirate Folk," which also seems apt.)

Before It's Dark is a musical maze with something new around every corner and the lurking danger that the Minotaur might appear at any moment. The lyrics are almost entirely surrealist, but ours seems to be a time for surrealism, a literary style that usually emerges during times of cultural decadence (so what does that tell you about these evil last days?).



That's a good thing for mindful bards, because the creative muse thrives on regular doses of surrealism, whose absurd juxtapositions of ideas and things stimulates all the nerves at the inspiration centre of the brain (not scientific but I'll say it anyway), and the bonus is that much of it is incredibly funny. A case in point from "Ua Mau (Pussy Cat):"

*I saw a cow's brain lying in the snow
It was smoking a joint and told me which way to go
So I went up north ...*

As in traditional surrealism, the contextual clues are mystical and metaphysical, pointing to a world not perceived by the five senses. If William Blake was alive today and an indie musician, his *Marriage of Heaven and Hell* would probably have sounded a lot like this. And if he ever took the stage he'd probably behave a lot like Speedy Johnson, no stranger to stage theatrics (watch him here with [Ol' Savannah](#)).

Some of the high points of *Before It's Dark*:

"I Don't Ever Need So Much," rife with rockabilly guitar and funk brass. The lyrics are hilarious:

*Just cast a little light on me;
We hope that might just bring some smiles and make us all worry free.*

It's just the kind of song you could sing with your friends on a road trip. Like "The Bohemian Rhapsody," the bridges bear almost no musical connection to the verses that precede them, which just adds to the fun.

"A Ship Full of Demons" is a waltz number about a ship of demons coming to wage war on the human race. Prog rock guitar frames the demons' droll chorus: "God makes you cry and the devil makes you laugh. So we must laugh!"

There are a couple of mock country tunes, "An Everlasting Youth" (musings on the meaning of life) and "Eternal Bliss," which, like a Jonathan Coulton song, is sweet on the outside and disturbing on closer inspection.

"The Day Man Dies" is reminiscent of Latin American protest songs, complete with minor key and heavy acoustic guitar strumming.

"Deep in the Mire" is the most coherent song in the whole set. A song of love lost, it uses mud as a metaphor for a lost richness.

Before It's Dark manifests four of the Mindful Bard's [criteria](#) for music well worth a listen:

- It's authentic, original, and delightful.
- It provides respite from a sick and cruel world.
- 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](#).

Considerations

Deanna Roney



Studying through AU opens doors. Its unique delivery style means that people who cannot relocate are still able to access higher education. AU also gives students studying at other universities an opportunity to complete credits quicker through credit transfer. I was surprised how many people attending traditional university also attend AU, even if for only a course or two. It allows those students to take the courses they want/need even when there is a scheduling conflict.

For full-time or exclusively AU students, the social atmosphere is much different than at bricks and mortar (B&M) schools.

There is typically a single event that a decent number of students will attend—convocation. When I started, I felt isolated—like I was the only one studying a specific course. There was no comradery and it was a strange feeling. I was grateful for the opportunity to complete my degree on my terms, but it was also created a bit of an island for me.

I eventually found places to connect with other students, and that connection made the experience more enjoyable. It made me wonder though—what are we missing from a B&M school? The social aspect is certainly lacking with AU, there is only so much community that can be established when the students are spread across the globe. I spent a little time in a B&M school and in that short time I made life long friends. People I really connected with and still stay close with, even though now we live hours apart and maybe only speak a few times a year. I have, however, made life time connections with people at AU, the only difference is that I've never met them.

The social aspect may be different, but the connections we make with each other are no less real. We don't go and party with each other, but we connect through struggle and accomplishment, we cheer each other on through studies and beyond as we embark into the world—striving for our dreams.

AU gives us opportunities that we may not otherwise get, but with those come certain struggles and elations that can be hard to understand for those outside of this world. There is no one answer for everyone. For some, the idea of studying alone without the outlet of a classroom or the after-parties is daunting and uninviting.

But for others, it is about studying, and crafting connections based on that, while letting off steam elsewhere. While some may cringe at spending hours locked away in an office, alone, with their nose pressed into a book, I loved it. This is why AU was a great fit for me, it allowed me to learn in the way that worked best for me. I was able to craft connections with students, when I found the appropriate channels, and make connections that are no less real than those I formed through the B&M university.

There are pros and cons to every method of studying. But with AU it removes the barriers that many face when wanting to get a higher education. The biggest for me was I didn't want to leave my life for three years to finish my degree. If I had gone to a bricks and mortar institution, I would have been missing everything here, and,

while I would still have got a degree, I'm not confident it would have had the same impact on me, or the way I think. Studying here allowed me to process and allow my mind to grow free of distractions. I was happy, and studying happy is more effective than studying when you're not.

I think the most important thing to consider when choosing what school to attend is where will you be happiest? Maybe you don't know, and that is okay. But it isn't always about reputation or what might be the "best" choice, it is about where you will be able to focus the most, and where you will be able to let the words in that you are learning and allow them to change and shape you.

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

Women of Interest

Rachel Zimmerman was born in 1972 in London, Ontario. She is a space scientist and inventor of the Blissymbol printer. The Blissymbol printer translates Blissymbols, which are taped on a board, into written language on a computer screen. Through this device, for the first time, non-speaking people and people with severe disabilities can communicate with others. At just twelve years old, Zimmerman created this device for an entry into the school science fair and won a silver medal at the World Exhibition of Achievement of Young inventors. She went on to earn her degree in Space Science from the International Space University in France. Rachel Zimmerman currently works for the Planetary Society in California. She has written many articles and received numerous awards, including the Visionary Award for Women in Film and Television Showcase at the Toronto International Film Festival in 2011.

The following websites include additional information about this inventive woman:

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

<http://www.women-inventors.com/Rachel-Zimmerman.asp>

<http://lemelson.mit.edu/resources/rachel-zimmerman>

Student Sizzle AU's Hot Social Media Topics

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

AthaU Facebook Group

Barry, who recently applied to graduate, posts encouraging words for struggling students. Sandra is offering a barely-used HRMT 387 textbook for sale. Megan wonders if it's possible to download an e-text and have it printed. Cass asks if she can order an e-text so she can listen to the audio version.

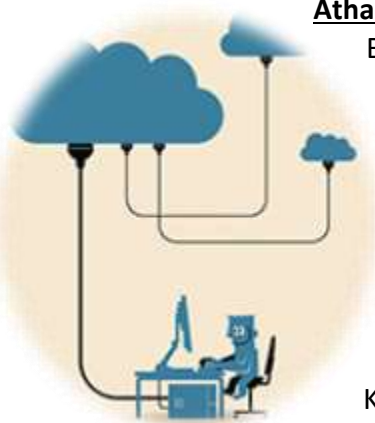
Other posts include exam wording, studying with twins, AUSU's executive blog, and courses ANTH 320, CMIS 351, HADM 488, and MATH 244.

Twitter

@AthabascaU tweets: "The 2017 #AthaU Alumni Award Nominations are NOW OPEN! Know someone who fits the bill? Nominate away: <http://ow.ly/hnY330aJJA5>."

@AthabascaUSU (AUSU) tweets: "Tired of waiting? AUSU's April Executive blog is all about AU service standards and what to do if they are not met. <http://bit.ly/2oMVREg>."

@AthabascaUBiz tweets: "Convocation 2017 is coming! Are you ready? Start by checking out our handy convocation checklist: <https://goo.gl/mUprQn>."





Do the Little Things

Living on a farm has its share of blessings and pain-in-the-butt realities. We are largely responsible for our own affairs. If you want potable water, dig a well and run a line into your house. If you want to trade in your coal oil lamp for something with a few more lumens, you need to trench in a power line from the service running in front of your property. If you need natural gas, tie into the local utility company. If you're old enough to remember landlines and want a ringy dinky telephone of your own, call Telus to connect the line. If you prefer a flush toilet over a two-hole outhouse, you'll need a septic tank and field or pump-out.

Each one of those come with price tags in the thousands and thousands of dollars. Hiring a trencher and operator, plumber, electrician, gasfitter, and general contractor. Calling Dial Before You Dig. Putting up with the mess and inconvenience.

Eventually, it's done and you live your forever after country dream life. Until, decades later stuff starts happening. A few weeks ago, our phone line went dead. Not as big a deal as it used to be before cell phones, but a damned nuisance anyway. Turns out a wire broke in the cable a few miles from home.

Last fall we noticed that, for no apparent reason, the lights in the house would dim. We put up with it and tried to explain it away. Quite soon, we (okay, I) got scared that the house would burn down because something was obviously wrong. Very wrong and electricity scares me at the best of times. A service man came and tightened something. Problem persists. Second guy repairs the connection at the house. No go. Third guy replaces a breaker at the transformer on the pole in our yard.

When I can longer run the oven, do a load of laundry, and make a piece of toast simultaneously, Roy calls again. This time, it seems replacing the transformer with a higher amperage one should be the answer to our prayers. Initial estimate: \$6900. Having them consider it an equipment failure means we'll pay *only* about \$1700. Thank goodness.

Today while we went to do our income tax, the guys replaced the transformer. A disgusting toxic overwhelming smell greeted us when we opened the door of the house. We couldn't place it. We tried to locate the source.

Guess what? Surge protectors work. It partially melted, looked scorched, and smelled like hell. But the Lenovo laptop, iMac desktop computer, Sony CD player, phone charger, and extra monitor all appear unscathed. Just discovered a second protector fried. Nothing much plugged into that one. Whoa, close call.

The moral of the story is this: we need to do the little things to protect the big things. Otherwise, those investments are in jeopardy through complacency or neglect. Plus, you may dodge having to file an insurance claim, from where I sit.



Dear Barb

Barbara Godin

The Costs of Education

Dear Barb:

My brother is getting married in a few months and he's having a destination wedding. The problem is that I cannot afford the \$3,000 to go to his wedding. I am in my twenties, recently graduated, and have just started a new job. I have huge student loans I have to start paying and I need a car to get back and forth to work. My brother and other family members think I should attend the wedding as it is a once in a lifetime event. Am I a horrible person for not going in debt to attend my brother's wedding? Thanks, perplexed Wanda.

Hi Wanda:

I am surprised that your family members would expect you to go on this trip as they must know your situation. How do your parents feel? Maybe they should all get together and pay for your trip if they feel so strongly. I do not think you should be expected to dish out \$3,000 to attend your brother's wedding especially considering where you are in your life. Many couples who have destination weddings will also have a gathering at home so the people who could not attend the destination wedding will be able to celebrate. If you can't afford to go, then that's all there is to it. You have to assume your brother and family members will get over it in time. Thanks for your letter.

Dear Barb:

This is the first time I have written for advice, but I am desperate. My wife works part time and is taking three courses at AU, plus we have two boys aged seven and eight and I work full time. My wife

is so exhausted that she does nothing around the house; therefore I have to do everything for the boys. Our house is a disaster and most nights we end up having chicken strips and fries. I try to get my wife to help out, but she spends her time in the bedroom with the door shut studying. She tries to reassure me that she's almost finished her degree and then she will be able to help out more, but she's been saying this for three years. I think she should cut back on her work hours or take one less course. What do you think? I don't mind helping out, but this is just too one sided. Thanks, Dan.

Hi Dan:

I feel your exhaustion. Housework and child care should be shared, unless there are extenuating circumstances. Your wife seems to be putting her needs ahead of you and the children. I agree with you she needs to cut back her work or school schedule. Another option would be for you to get someone in to help with the chores. Perhaps hire a cleaning lady to come in one day a week. This will take some of the burden off you, but your wife will still be spending all her time in the bedroom studying, so it seems she needs to cut back somewhere so she can enjoy some family time with you and her sons. Hopefully she will see the light and realize part of a balanced life includes time with family and friends. Happy cleaning Dan.

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.

I'VE BEEN WRITING ABOUT MUSIC SINCE THE TURN OF THE CENTURY—



IT'S HOW I GOT TO BE WHERE I AM TODAY.



AND I'VE REACHED A CONCLUSION.



WE'RE NOW LIVING IN THE WEIRDEST AND MOST TRANSCENDENT PERIOD IN MUSIC HISTORY.

WHY? BECAUSE EVERYTHING IS NOW STANDING STILL— AND CHANGING AT THE SPEED OF LIGHT.



IT'S LIKE THE Q CONTINUUM ON STAR TREK—

IF WE'RE ALIVE AFTER 2000, WE CAN FIND A SHORTCUT TO ANY MUSICAL PLACE AND TIME. BUT BEFORE WE APPROACH THE RANCH HOUSE, WE NEED TO ASK—





IS THIS A GOOD THING?



All the Music Be Happenin' Now: The Mindful Bard Guide to Music in the First Two Decades of the 21st Century

~Wanda Waterman



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

IMPORTANT DATES

- **Apr 10:** [Deadline to register in a course starting May 1](#)
- **Apr 11:** [AUSU Council Meeting](#)
- **Apr 28:** [Deadline to apply for course extension for June](#)
- **Apr 30:** [Deadline to apply for 2017 Convocation](#)
- **May 5:** [Deadline to finish courses for 2017 Convocation](#)
- **May 10:** [Deadline to register in a course starting Apr 1](#)
- **May 14:** [AUSU Council Meeting](#)

Student Lifeline – Healthy Habits

Whether your goal is to quit smoking, lose weight, improve your sleep, eat a healthier diet, or adopt exercises like mindfulness to reduce stress, **Student LifeLine** has resources to help you develop healthy habits.

Contact **Student LifeLine** any time, 24/7 at **1-800-567-2255 (TTY:1-877-371-9978)**, to connect with a caring consultant or to book short-term counselling sessions with professional therapists.

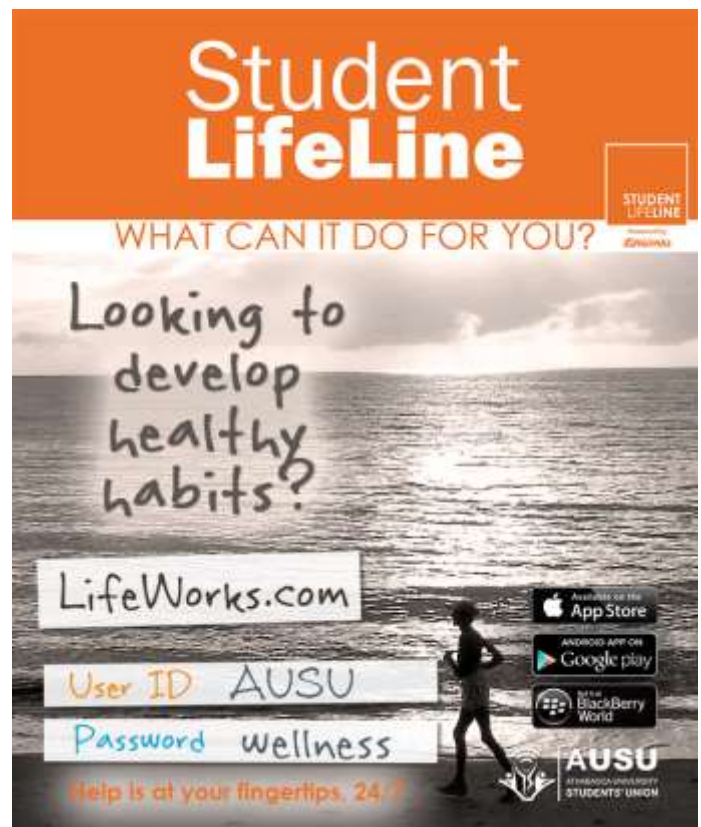
This is a FREE service for all AUSU members!

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

- New podcast, [Five Ways to Boost Your Mental Energy](#)
- New [Weight Loss Toolkit](#) with resources designed to help you achieve and maintain a healthy weight—including calculators, apps, recipes, tips, and more.
- [Sleep Well Toolkit](#).
- Articles such as [Five Reasons to Quit Smoking in Your 20s](#), [How to Be Active Without Joining a Gym](#), [Taking Care of Yourself](#), [Tips on Leading a Longer and Healthier Life](#), and [Walking for Exercise](#).

Could you use support with managing stress or adopting healthier habits? Contact **Student LifeLine** any time to connect with one of our expert consultants for resources, guidance, and support. **Student LifeLine** can help you take care of yourself and your loved ones.

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



AU Quick Links

Ever have trouble navigating AU's website? AUSU had an AU Quick Links page with easy to access links to important services and resources available to students.

Check out our AU Quick Links online [here](#).



**Athabasca University
Quick Links**

Courtesy of AUSU

CLASSIFIEDS

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

THE VOICE

500 Energy Square - 10109 – 106 St NW - Edmonton AB - T5J 3L7
Ph: 855.497.7003 - Fax: 780.497.7003 attn: Voice Editor

Publisher	Athabasca University Students' Union
Editor-In-Chief	Sarah Cornett
Managing Editor	Karl Low

Regular Columnists Hazel Anaka, Barbara Lehtiniemi, Wanda Waterman,
Barb Godin, Carla Knipe, Scott Jacobsen

www.voicemagazine.org

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

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

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

© 2016 by *The Voice Magazine*