

THE VOICE

MAGAZINE

Vol 25 Issue 17 2017-04-28

Josh's Story

Tragedy Doesn't Have to be the End

Burnout is Real

Don't Assume You're Immune

Lupus as a Student

When your Body Fights You

*Plus:
You Know You're an AU Student...
Books & Bookkeeping
and much more!*



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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR



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

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

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

EDITORIAL**Deal with It.****Karl Low**

In case you weren't aware, this last week has been National Organ Donation Awareness Week. Which is why our feature this week is a tale by Barb Godin of the family of an organ donor and the responses it brings. It's worth remembering, at a time like this, that tragedy isn't necessarily the final word, even if it's the last event in a person's life. Equal parts heart-wrenching and life-affirming, I couldn't think of a better story to lead the issue.

Not that there wasn't competition. This week saw a few articles come in with a theme of dealing with life when it gets hard. It's good information, from Carla Knipe's recent experience with burnout, to Tara Howse's article on being a student with Lupus, and how that affects her studies.

With another aspect of tragedy, Deanna Roney reminds us that this is the last weekend before your tax return is due to the federal government. And, like the other articles, manages to find some good to come out of it in providing a balance and respite to your creative side.

But it's not all dire, either. Because the web is all about lists, this week, we've brought you the list of ways to tell that you're an AU student, or perhaps it could be better thought of as how to tell if someone else is an AU student, because you probably already know if you are. And we also include a huge interview with the band You Bred Raptors? (yes, the question mark is part of the band name, in the tradition of groups that want to make it hard for publicists). If you follow *The Voice Magazine* on Facebook, you'll understand why this article makes me particularly happy to publish this week, beyond it simply being a really good read into a band that I'd heard nothing about before, but am now looking to check out. How many bands, after all, play with an eight-string bass and a cello both in subway stations and in the Museum of Modern Art? And then there's our regular selection of news, advice, and other entertainment to keep you distracted.

However, I couldn't let this editorial go by without noting the recent events on our political scene. To be specific, the opening of the advance polls for the Conservative Party of Canada's leadership, happening just as one of the candidates who was widely thought to be a front-runner, Kevin O'Leary, deciding to step aside. There still remain thirteen potential leadership candidates, and the differences in views between them are further than many people expected, whether that's Maxime Bernier's hard libertarianism, to Kellie Lietch's immigration focussed campaign, all the way to Michael Chong who seems to be pushing hard for a return of the Progressive Conservative title. In between are several candidates who are running closer to the status quo that we already know from the CPC, with Andrew Scheer, Erin O'Toole, and Lisa Raitt having the most name recognition.

While I don't favor conservative beliefs in general, the wide variety on offer here has me watching this race with some interest. And while Canadian politics usually ends up turning to the most unexciting outcome, meaning I fully expect Mr. Scheer or Mr. O'Toole to emerge the winner, the possibility for a sharp turn from the current policies of the CPC is an interesting one. Enjoy the read!

A stylized, handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Karl'.

Josh's Story

Barb Godin



Josh and Aaliyah(Bee)

Josh was just twenty-seven years old when his young life tragically ended. Josh was a popular, friendly guy who would do anything to help a friend. He could always be found in his garage rebuilding jeeps, trucks, or other vehicles. Josh's father, Mike, and sister, Jenn, were attempting to get their lives together and recover from the devastating loss of their beloved wife and mother as a result of a car accident she had been in less than two years earlier. Recently, Josh had met and fallen in love with Melissa, and he was finally able to envision a bright future for him and his young daughter, Aaliyah (Bee). But everything changed on the morning of July 15, 2016, when Josh jumped on his newly purchased Suzuki motorcycle and began the half hour drive to his job. Disaster struck. A horrific crash found him being rushed to a nearby hospital in critical condition. It was bad enough that the Windsor Star reported on it.

Mike and Jenn arrived at the hospital and were assured by the attending nurse that Josh would survive, although the road to recovery would be long and difficult. But within hours Josh's condition had deteriorated—his brain began to swell. After many attempts to stop the swelling the doctors stopped offering hope for recovery. There was no brain activity. Life support was the only thing keeping Josh alive. Mike and Jenn knew this was not the life Josh would have wanted, but as they stood in the hall trying to digest the fact

that they would have to face another loss, Josh's nurse asked to meet with them. Mike knew they were going to ask about organ donation and his immediate response was "no," he was not going to donate his son's organs. Jenn, on the other hand, was an organ donor. She shared with her dad her belief that if Josh were in their shoes, he would say "go for it." Mike was still hesitant, but when Jenn mentioned their late mother, who had been a nurse, would have wanted to help others, Mike knew in his heart it was the right thing to do. The heart wrenching decision was made. Arrangements were put in place, recipients were notified, and, on July 19, 2016, Jenn and Mike said a final goodbye to their beloved son and brother.

Ten days later Mike and Jenn received a letter from the Trillium Gift of Life Network thanking them for being an organ donor. Four people with terminal medical conditions had been helped according to the letter. At this point, Mike and Jenn knew that, as painful as it had been, they had made the right decision. Since Josh's passing, his family continues to receive anonymous personal letters from thankful recipients. Following are some excerpts from two of the letters they received. This first one is from a kidney and pancreas recipient.

"I am the recipient of your family member's two organs, kidney and pancreas. I am an elementary school teacher and have had diabetes for many years and developed kidney disease as a complication. The thought of being rid of both diseases was a miracle in my eyes. I have been struggling in writing this letter to you because I can't express my gratitude enough. How do you say thank you enough to a family that has suffered such a great loss. The impact this transplant has had on me has had its ups and downs, only because I am so grateful for the gift

you have given me and also feel so compassionately about what you have gone through. I want to thank you from the bottom of my heart and most sincerely for giving the gift of life and giving me, personally, a second chance at life! You are truly a blessing."

And an excerpt from a letter sent by the recipient of Josh's lungs

"Thank you! Thank you! Thank you! Such small words that hold so much heartfelt meaning. I can't even begin to express the joy and happiness I have in my heart because of you and your loved one's generous gift. My family and I are so blessed and grateful to you knowing I will be able to live a longer and healthier life. I can play and watch my grandchildren grow. I can travel and go camping once again. How great it is to be able to just stand and take in a deep breath and smell the smell of fresh fallen rain and to walk more than 300 meters without running out of air. My life was not much more than just existing. We prayed for a miracle and then that day came, our prayers were answered. The gift of your loved one was given to me and gave me a second chance at life. I am looking forward to a brighter future. So thank you once again. I am so grateful to you and I promise I will do everything possible to live with great care, responsibility, healthy habits and love life to the fullest, to honor you and your loved one. "

Mike still has his hesitations about organ donation, but he appreciates that his son could give others a chance at life. No matter how painful it is for Jenn to read these letters, she knows Josh is at peace knowing he could help others right through the end of his life. She remains a strong supporter of organ donation and encourages others to sign their donor card.

Barbara Godin is a graduate of AU and writes the "Dear Barb" column. She lives in London, Ontario with her husband, two dogs, and one cat. She can be reached on twitter @BarbGod



In Conversation ..with You Bred Raptors?

Wanda Waterman



New York post-rock act You Bred Raptors? have just released the track "Hyperbole" from their aptly named album *International Genetics*, due for summer release. Seasoned and well-loved metro buskers, the band has played over 800 subway shows and toured nearly forty North American cities.

The instrumentation of this erudite ensemble includes an eight-string bass, cello, glockenspiel, and drums. Their instrumental tracks have found devoted followings among filmmakers, serious music fans, and circus performers,

among many others. They've performed with Yoko Ono at her *One Woman Show* at the Museum of Modern Art, have spoken on TED Talks, were the house band for ADULT SWIM at Comic Con, and have worked on

soundtracks for TROMA Pictures. They've been lauded in such stellar journals as *The Economist* and the *Atlantic*. Next month they're going to begin touring the United States, giving fans a taste of the new album before its release. Recently Peat Rains, who plays 8-string bass, kinderklavier, and glockenspiel in the band and writes most of the songs, took the time to talk to us about the blessings and hazards of the DIY music career.

What role did music play in your lives while you were growing up?

It's going to sound cliché to say we have diverse musical backgrounds, but here I am saying just that. During long hours in a tour van there might be maybe two or three bands we can all agree on listening to for any extended period of time. Those are usually Pink Floyd, RATATAT, and Russian Circles.

I personally grew up with hippie parents and was exposed to jam band and Celtic music growing up. I rebelled against that when I could and got into punk rock, but eventually came back to instrumental music. As a band, we don't make any sense on paper and our musical tastes just exacerbate that.

Queen is probably my favorite band and I play in a band without guitars or vocals. Music has always been and always will be my escape and the only facility that makes sense to me, however difficult and frustrating it is to make a reality.

What or who in your musical training had the most—and best—influence on you, as musicians and as a human being?

My father was a bass player and my mother was also very musical. They taught us the importance of seeing live music. I'm mostly self-taught, outside of a year of guitar lessons in seventh grade. But even that was a huge influence. I was lucky to get a local teacher named Tim Warman who saw and respected that I colored outside the lines.

He told me after a year that I didn't seem like I was having fun learning other people's songs. He encouraged me to not only write my own songs but to lead my own band.

I can probably speak for the whole band here and say that the collective straphanger on the subway has had a huge impact on us. While it's more abstract, seeing so many demographics and classes all descending upon the same transportation system is really reflective. We can barely survive as artists in this city but coming in contact with so many people that are struggling even more and against some pretty heavy shit has made us better humanitarians for sure. The mob mentality also helps you hone your craft. If they don't like your music, you'll know. And you learn to not just perform your songs but to be a performer.

What were some of your most amazing musical experiences?

Some of the most amazing experiences performing have happened in the subway. It's just more honest down there. You don't have to deal with sometimes shitty bands or fighting to get paid or grumpy sound guys or bringing enough people in the door. If people like your music they stop and listen and if they don't they tell you that you suck. At least there's no industry bullshit in that transaction.

I've also been blown away by live performances in my life. Seeing GWAR in college made me realize you can put on a show with theatrics and lots of crowd interaction, that you can break the fourth wall and not be a pretentious sad-sack on stage singing about a breakup.

I also remember seeing Russian Circles open for a really big band in DC around the same time. They played four songs for 20 minutes and I'd never heard of them. I left after that. There was no way that any band could top what I'd just seen.

Where did you pick up that band name?

Oh, we 100% stole this band name from Jurassic Park. We'll keep it until we get a "Cease and Desist" letter from Universal Pictures.

If you had to give your music a genre, what would you call it?

I suppose our genre is "prehistoric post-rock," but that's a made-up genre. Maybe that's why we don't have a record label or manager. We aren't easily categorized. There are elements of experimental, but we aren't masturbatory. There are elements of prog, but we aren't mathy enough. There are elements of metal, but we aren't heavy enough. We'll never fit in, and we're okay with that.

You're based in the borough that spawned The Ramones, Cyndi Lauper, and John Williams, among many other notables. Does that intimidate or inspire you?

I can't convey how much of a dork I am other than to say I got more excited about John Williams than the Ramones. NYC is intimidating with its roster, but that was a different time. I'll go out on a limb and say that most of the musicians that "made it" yesteryear couldn't hack it today. And that's not a slight; it's just a fact that they were musical geniuses who weren't too keen on social interaction, let alone social media interaction. They didn't have to worry about how many retweets they received or how many Hearts they scored during an inane Periscope feed.

The music industry is in limbo. There are still remnants of a very industry-controlled past and a bleak future of YouTube cover bands and regurgitated, vapid pop music. I have plenty of integrity and confidence in our music. I know it has merit and something to offer. The business and politics is tough to stomach. Just tell me whom to sleep with and I'll do it. Seriously—line 'em up.

How do you, with your acoustic instruments, find so many rapt audiences in a musical world now steeped in loop pedals, synthetic beats, and other electronica?

I find myself biting my tongue with this question a lot. I personally hate a lot of electronica and DJ culture. But I've been told (repeatedly) that some DJs are actually pretty cool and care about their craft. Again, I'll refrain from deepthroating my foot but I can't help but wince when bands bring laptops onstage or play to backing tracks. I know industry people love it because it's predictable and idiot-proof. But it's just such a slight to the audience.

I'd rather see some improvisation or some wavering tempos running congruent with the energy of the room. I use a looping pedal, but it doesn't have a quantizer. Hell, it's not even a looping pedal—it's a Delay pedal that I wildly misuse. And when I fuck up and am off by half a beat, then by Jesus, we just roll with it and everyone suffers with us. Mistakes are an integral part of our live shows.

What's the story behind "Hyperbole?"

I was personally sick of people calling me a fake bass player for having 8 strings and sometimes playing with a pick. We were also sort of burned out between tours and wanted to write something upbeat and challenging to play but accessible to an audience.

We were opening for legendary bassist Stu Hamm and I was more than intimidated about looking like a no-talent-ass-clown in front of him. I wanted to write a song that would let me hold my ground in front of such a master of the arena. Usually my songs have deep meaning, but this one was more of an experiment to see if the three of us could get together and write something on the spot.

It came together rather quickly and was arranged, phrased, and concluded pretty naturally. Being in the key of G can lead to lots of unnecessary solos and self-serving parts, so I'm glad we kept it pretty simple and to the point.

What do you like best about International Genetics so far?

I want all our albums to sound diverse but to still have a working narrative. Each album has a theme and part of me wants to completely break from that so we don't get stuck in a cyclical loop of things only partly working. But this recording was probably the longest we've done in this band. From conception to pressing, it's spanned about five drummers and three years. Despite that, it has a cohesive arc. Each album has us coming into our own a bit more. This one feels the most personal to me as the primary songwriter. I hope it makes you cry and ruins your makeup.

Do you have any funny or bizarre stories to tell about your subway performances?

We've seen people get engaged, break up, get arrested, and have memories seared into their hippocampus while we've played in the subway. It's gratifying to be the soundtrack to people's lives, whether they want us there or not.

We're constantly on guard for people trying to steal from us or for junkies fucking with us. It happens less than it did when we were greenhorns in this life. We had one obviously very mentally ill person throwing blood and urine soaked trash at us at Herald Square a few years ago.

We usually try to ignore that as most times they get bored and find something else to do. But in the process of trying to power through it, we noticed that amongst the biohazard level trash, he was also throwing money at us. To him, it was all the same. Strips of newspaper held the same value as the five and ten dollar bills. So we just kept playing and mentally counted about \$85 soaked in bodily fluids that I suppose were for us? Then he left. He might have floated away or melted into the floor, I'm not totally sure.

AU-thentic Events

Upcoming AU Related Events

Business Undergraduate Info Session

Monday, May 1, 5:00 to 6:00 pm MDT
Online

Hosted by AU's Faculty of Business

<http://business.athabascau.ca/event-details/business-undergraduate-information-session2/>

register online at above address

Mitacs Funding Programs for Graduate Students

Tuesday, May 2, 1:00 to 2:00 pm MDT
Peace Hills Trust Building, Room 1217

In person and online

Hosted by AU's Faculty of Graduate Studies

<http://fgs.athabascau.ca/news/presentations/>
e-mail fgseducation@athabascau.ca to register

Academic Integrity Webinar

Tuesday, May 2, 5:00 to 6:00 pm MDT
Online

Hosted by AU Library

<http://library.athabascau.ca/orientations.html>

no pre-registration necessary

Online MBA for Executives Info Session - Vancouver

Wednesday, May 3, 12:00 to 1:30 pm MDT
Vancouver Convention Centre East, 1055 Canada Place East, Meeting Room 6, Vancouver BC
In person

Hosted by AU's Faculty of Business

<http://business.athabascau.ca/event-details/athabasca-university-executive-mba-information-session-vancouver-2/>

register online at above address

Online MBA for Executives Info Session - Burnaby

Wednesday, May 3, 5:30 to 7:00 pm MDT
Hilton Vancouver Metrotown, 6083 McKay Ave, Burnaby BC
In person

Hosted by AU's Faculty of Business

<http://business.athabascau.ca/event-details/athabasca-university-executive-mba-information-session-burnaby/>

register online at above address

AU Open House & Info Session

Thursday, May 4, 10:00 to 11:00 am MDT
Online

Hosted by Athabasca University

<http://www.athabascau.ca/discover/open-house/>
register online at above address

second session: Thursday, May 4, 6:00 to 7:00 pm MDT

What conditions do you require in your life to go on being creative?

Haha, this is a hilarious notion. I can't remember the last time I was comfortable. The only ones that can claim that in NYC are probably boring rich people. On one hand I want to say that you need to have discomfort and hardship in order to truly creatively thrive. But maybe that's just something that being poor for so long has taught me to reflexively say.

Trying to maintain a band after you hit 30 years old is plenty difficult. It's not something most people can hack. It really draws the line between lifer and hobbyist. It's just constant rejection and wading through political bullshit. It's not all doom and gloom but the returns are so rare compared to tedious amount of thankless work. And when you don't have a label, or management or booking agency backing you up, then it's up to you.

Creativity isn't waiting on a small hill for a zephyr to graze your cheek. It's feeling completely kneecapped after an A&R person tells you that you can't support a national touring band, even though the band wants you on the bill, because you don't have a tested female draw and still finding it inside to write some music based on that feeling. True story.

Are there any books, films, or albums that have deeply influenced your development as an artist?

Fahrenheit 451 [by Ray Bradbury] was the first book I encountered in school that flipped the switch for me. I enjoyed reading it and the arc of the book made me terrified about losing that freedom. I fell in love with reading after that. And with that, I also fell for music that I would put on while reading. Instrumental music was always a part of my life, but the two shared a symbiosis for me. I also sometimes read erotic fan fiction based on '80s television shows. It gives me weird boners.

As artists do you feel any desire to straighten out the world a little with the art you make?

I feel it's important to be a producer with our short time on earth. I get massively annoyed living in a city this small with so many people and seeing most of them just be consumers. Artists can barely survive here and yet people are flocking for this idealistic and archaic view of New York. We're doing our part to leave the earth better than how we found it. It's not an easy task when the deck is stacked against the working class and those in power work diligently to defund the arts and creativity.

If you had an artistic mission statement, what would it be?

This endeavor is akin to climbing an avalanche. Every inch of progress you make up is compounded with falling down dozens of feet under sheeting ice to certain death. In a business run by wealth, nepotism, connections, fake handshakes and toeing the party line, it's important to be smart but stay aligned with what sets you apart. Your entire career will have people telling you to do things differently until there is one person that finally gets it.

On the flipside, you have to play their game and adhere to the archaic dogma at times. Listen to the criticism and extrapolate ideas to constantly rework and retool. Best advice I have to offer is to hone your craft. Get good at it and never stop learning and improving.

Perform in front of actual people. Get the fuck off Instagram and YouTube and see how it feels to perform in front of beating hearts. Leave your comfort zone and grind it out. Get booed and bomb. Shed the thin skin and quit acting like an amateur when things go wrong and especially when things go right.

There hasn't been one day that has gone by that I haven't spent the majority of it fixated on making this a reality. Never get complacent. Never rest on your laurels. Don't get lazy. Don't get cocky. Respect your art enough not to make it a cliché.

Tell us about your current and upcoming projects.

Our new album is releasing in mid June after a 29-city tour that I booked by myself. Please come out and validate my life choices and reward the insanely hard work of DIY touring.

We'll have some bass playthroughs, music videos, sheet music, and other cool stuff to offer for our Patreon users. We'll also be doing some amazing tours in the Fall that I can't talk about yet, including some overseas stuff. We're currently scoring an audiobook from a horror writer and doing some filming for Adult Swim down in Atlanta in early summer.

Do you have anything else to add?

Let us score the new Jurassic Park film. Let's get a petition started. Hold on to your butts.

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



The Fit Student **Positively Beautiful**

Marie Well



Do you know your strengths? If you acted on your strengths, you could up your success at work, home, and school. Now, that's positive. To start, take the [VIA Signature Strengths Questionnaire](#)—the free version. You'll discover the strengths that could take you furthest. My top three strengths? (1) Love of learning, (2) kindness, and (3) love. My weakest strength? Humility. And I'm not ashamed to say that.

After I filled out the survey, the VIA sent me regular emails outlining various strengths, including the strength of beauty. The VIA defined beauty as not only appearance, but also skill, talent, and virtue.

That's a definition of beauty *Yahoo!* could embrace: you're a beauty if you score in smarts, skills, looks, or virtue. And if you're all four, you tug hearts. But, if you're just one, you can still leave a legacy of beauty: take Mother Teresa or Margaret Thatcher.

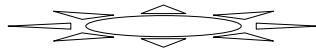
Yes, everyone's beautiful in ways, but to celebrate beauty as a strength, let's look to VIA's definition. With that said, go take the VIA questionnaire. Once you know your top strengths, indulge in them. If you're high on kindness, then give gifts and sweet words to fellow students. If you're big on the love of learning, read nonfiction books and watch Lynda.com videos.

And if you're beautiful—or simply appreciate beauty—then show off your smarts, buy silk suits, and do the right thing.

Barbara L. Fredrickson invites you to take the VIA questionnaire in her book *Positivity: Top-Notch Research Reveals the Upward Spiral that Will Change Your Life*. Yes, discovering your strengths—and focusing on them—can bring rushes of positivity. But, positivity is more than that, as Fredrickson reveals:

- With a 3:1 positive to negative ratio, we get happier, more creative, and more resilient. And the higher the ratio, the better.
- Feel the positivity in your heart and your body. If you don't feel in your heart the positive words you express, then the disjoint triggers stress hormones. So, bask in the positive.
- Reframe your negative life events in a positive light. And bolster the good feelings you get from your positive life events. Even make the ordinary extraordinary.
- If you lose a loved one, reflect on the good times and the positive characteristics. When your grief gets sprinkled with positive reflection, you recover more quickly.
- When something good fades, don't fret; savor it while it lasts. And prolong the savoring.
- To savor, share all your positives with the ones you love, but only if they celebrate your successes.
- Savor the acts of kindness you show others—and give thank with words and actions for the kindness you receive.
- Visualize your best possible future.
- Try to articulate your life's purpose. This purpose will guide your everyday mini-purposes.
- Discover your strengths, and act on them. If you do, your potential for success spikes.

You might be courageous, funny, nature-loving, hopeful, and so much more. Find your top three strengths. Savor them, act on them, flaunt them. In other words, make your life's purpose positively beautiful.



The Creative Spark! Funnel Your Life's Purpose

Marie Well



Do you have an untapped creative gift? I mean, something you do exceptionally well, but don't use? And whenever you dismiss your gift, do you feel an uneasy hunger? Because if you have an unused creative talent, then I hope fate unscrambles the puzzle so you see your gift in full raw potential.

I've discovered a dream. I scored top marks in university math, but I left the field, believing I didn't love math enough to die for it. But it haunts me: a gift I no longer nurture. I just couldn't see the fit—the potential.

That is, until I faced a vision. I got a job interview that directed me to Makerspace: an inventor's dream. Calgary's Makerspace opens its facility to inventors, hobbyists, and business-owners wanting to build products and prototypes. Makerspace has a

room for robotics, a room for laser cutting, a room for 3D printing—a room for most any manufacturer's aim.

Now, I can tap into all my passions and talents through a single vision: building stuff to sell. You can too. We each possess a life-funnel that mixes all our skills, talents, and passions into a single vision. To discover that vision, get skills and seek new possibilities.

Sometimes opportunities fast-track our dreams. Other times, our dreams take painstaking work. Regardless, fill your funnel with dreams and discover your vision—through creativity today.

To that end, here are some tips on kickstarting your creativity:

In bold below, Liz Dean outlines creativity tricks and tips in her book *How to be Creative: Rediscover your Creativity and Live the Life you Truly Want*. I muse in what follows.

Learn to bake while recovering from cancer. Similarly, why not learn to bake while recovering from exams? Build a robot. Learn how to edit videos. Make 3D animations. Each creative endeavor builds on the last, forming mountains of possibilities to etch your life's purpose upon.

And learning a single creative task can take your life into multiple, fulfilling directions. Each new direction acts as input for your funnel's final vision. That final vision gets clearer the more skills you add. That vision also morphs into a bigger and better version with each new skill you add.

Creativity comes in three forms, according to Professor Margaret Boden (as cited in Dean):

- (1) combining familiar things into something novel,
- (2) taking existing stuff and changing things like color, shape, or theme, and
- (3) coming up with original thought inspired by new environments, a redesign of your house, etcetera.

So, if you're amazing at, say, accounting, but hate it, don't fret; funnel it. Combine your accounting talent with your other passions to brew new goals.

And if you can't find the dream, change your surroundings. Go to a museum in a new city for one weekend every month for a year. Exchange bucket lists with a group of strangers, and live out someone else's goals for a year. That would inspire creativity—and tolerance for ambiguity.

You won't find your life's purpose on the couch. Tweak your world to discover bigger, clearer possibilities.

At the beginning of each day, do one of the following: dance, doodle, conjure happy thoughts, feel gratitude, laugh—play.

Doodle a dream each morning. Yes, make a lofty goal and doodle yourself doing it.

I wrote a list of tasks I would love to achieve if I faced no barriers of age, money, time, or talent. At the top of my list I wrote: "produce a blockbuster film" and "host an event at the Saddledome" and "start and operate a college." I have over twenty of these lofty goals.

I then broke each goal into sub-steps. Although the list seems like little-more-than wallpaper, at least I've dreamt up passions and stuffed them in the funnel. I keep in mind that one tweak can fulfill a dream. Or, in the

case of anxiety, one tiny shift in your thoughts can cure you. Or, in my boyfriend's words, "One kind act can change a life forever."

Every little bit doesn't just add up. More accurately, each slight change opens a new universe.

So, list your wildest dreams. Every morning, take one item from your list and get creative. Doodle yourself fulfilling that dream. Or conjure happy thoughts of basking in success. Or dance the thrill of overcoming the so-called impossible. Fill your funnel with the best fuel—and ride the Indie.

When we can create without deadlines or pressure, our happiness rises.

Learn skills that bring you joy. Learn, say, design skills, knowing that whatever you create, you can turn into 3D products, built by your own hands. Learn what causes time to suspend. Create. Fail. Tweak. Repeat and realize.

Why learn new skills? To better see your best life's purpose. A paradox? I call it a creative spark!



Burnout Is Real

Carla Knipe



Spring is the season when university students push themselves like crazy to finish course work and exams so that they can enjoy the summer. Because Athabasca University students do not follow a traditional course calendar like other universities, they seem to constantly push themselves to their limits. AU students are known for being master multitaskers; they handle the pressures of their studies while working their day jobs, taking care of their families, and working their way through their long to-do lists. But there is a flipside to constant pressure and stress that nobody likes to talk about until it rears its ugly head: burnout.

I found myself staring this truth in the face recently, as I sat in my GP's office, on the verge of tears and feeling desperate. I'd been going a million miles an hour for months, rarely taking a day off and feeling proud that I was able to push through the tiredness. I thought this was a good thing to do because I was working toward my goal

of finishing my degree. I also had to deal with the death of my mother, a house move, and helping my son with his struggles in school. But even though I was racing through life like a Formula 1 car, I ran into trouble. I crashed, and it was sudden, and it was spectacular.

I felt like I'd hit both a mental and physical wall. I was exhausted, to the point where I just didn't know what to do next or how I'd cope anymore. After a heartfelt chat with my doctor, I was signed off work and told that I needed to take some time to recover. Even though it wasn't like I'd broken my leg or suffered any outward signs of trauma, she said I was experiencing a great illness and I needed to get better from it. And though this

diagnosis was a huge relief—that this wasn't "just in my head" and my concerns were being taken seriously—it also created another flood of emotions. I'd never been in this position before, and it was completely new territory for me. What would happen to everyone and everything else if I weren't there to take care of them? I didn't know how I got to this point, and I had less of an idea about what to do next.

Burnout is one of those vague psychology buzzwords that has come to mean a whole bunch of generalities in the same way that "stress" and "depression" have been misappropriated and trivialized so that their true meanings have been watered down. But this is exactly why burnout needs to be taken more seriously. It is a consequence of severe stress and the toxicity of modern life. It is also sneaky; it can take many years of going at a fast pace before a person realizes they are in trouble. It is an epidemic that is getting worse, according to medical statistics. There are the consequences of it that are unseen, such as losing a lot of productivity and inner joy; then there are the outer consequences like affecting close relationships and even triggering long-term health issues. It is difficult to know which effects are worse.

The result of coming face to face with burnout was the realization that, in a perverse way, the "busy-ness is good" mentality I'd built up led to me becoming fueled by stress and weirdly addicted to it. But, like any other drug addict, I had to realize that the only way that I would recover was to be humble and admit that what I was doing was no longer working. I needed to change. In the same way that the universe has certain parameters in which it operates and one cannot mess with the laws of physics, people also have their own sets of limits and certain rules must be obeyed. Constant stress, lack of sleep, bad nutrition and punishing work schedules will eventually take their toll on both body and mind. It is when people get smug, thinking that they can ignore these limits and keep on pushing themselves to the max without consequence that burnout happens. And when it does, it is as traumatic as any physical health crisis, like a heart attack or cancer.

The burnout situation I've found myself in has been hard on my family as well as myself, but I know I've been lucky. I caught it at the first real sign of trouble, rather than continuing to deny what was happening to me. Health and wellness professionals have been placed in my path to help me heal, and I've graciously submitted to their expertise. Like other mental conditions such as depression, each person's journey to recovery will be personal and unique to them, and it's important to seek out proper medical care rather than just going it alone. But here are a few things I've learned so far.

ASK.

Asking for help is the biggest and most difficult step. It was so difficult for me to make that appointment with my GP. It also was difficult to have the conversations with my husband and with my employer. But I admit that the most difficult part was to first allow myself to face up to what was really going on. I was also scared, to be honest, to have these talks with people because I was afraid of the reactions I'd get. I haven't exactly posted the nitty-gritty details about what I've been going through on social media, but I've confided in close friends. The positivity and support I've received has been a great help. More importantly, I've learned to continually ask my inner self what I need at each moment and to learn to trust and listen to my intuition. The answers might not be immediate, but taking the time to reflect and check in with my inner self often results in surprisingly clear guidance.

BREATHE.

One of the ways that severe stress manifests itself is in an inability to breathe deeply. The chest is tight and breathing is shallow and even physically painful. Buddhists who meditate say that it isn't down to a total emptying of the mind, which is a myth of meditation, but that it all comes "back to breath" and allowing thoughts to come and go. Slowing down and calming the breath can have an amazing effect on both physical and mental health. Taking this further, learning to meditate is a great tool to manage stress. I found Dan Harris' book *10% Happier: How I Tamed the Voice in*

My Head, Reduced Stress Without Losing My Edge, and Found Self-Help That Actually Works--A True Story gave me some great insight into learning to become more mindful. There are also some other great workbooks and CDs about meditation and mindfulness out there; the trick is finding what resources are a good fit.

CARE.

Burnout is the result of the prolonged absence of self-care, so recovery hinges on learning how to re-introduce it. This is easier said than done for people who have got used to pushing their needs aside for so long. I've had the air plane analogy "put your own oxygen mask on first" quoted to me many times just lately, but there is truth in it.

I realize that if I keep putting my needs on hold, I will render myself incapable to care for anyone else. Self-care can be on a large scale, such as taking a sabbatical, retreat or vacation, or undergoing a course of psychotherapy. But there is great power in the simple things like taking a bubble bath, going for a walk around the neighbourhood, or sitting down to enjoy a cup of tea. Self-care is also found in making positive choices such as drinking enough water and watching one's nutrition. Lack of sleep is also a symptom of severe stress and burnout, and learning how to get a good night's sleep can be a difficult yet important lesson in getting one's body and mind back on track. The small acts of self-care are as important as the big stuff because the steps to recovery often build on the little things that turn into healthy habits. Self-care takes other forms too, such as learning to adopt healthy personal boundaries and learning to say "no."

I am still recovering from burnout. I cannot say that I am at the point of thriving just yet, but I am slowly climbing my way out of the dark hole I fell into. I wish that I would have never got myself into this situation, and I hope that others never find themselves dealing with what I'm going through. But in a way, I see burnout as a gift. I see it as a place where I can begin again and make a pact to treat myself better from now on. Perhaps, like other illnesses, burnout will leave me with a scar or two, but I've been reminded that health is not something to ever take for granted.

Carla is an AU student who lives and writes in Calgary, Alberta. Say "hi" to her on Twitter @LunchBuster.

Student Sizzle AU's Hot Social Media Topics

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

AthaU Facebook Group

Heidi announces AU's revamped website is ready for exploring. Laurie expresses concern that her final mark from a course finished in February is still not available. Komal wonders if it is advisable to get an undergrad and grad degree at the same institution. Jesse asks if course materials will be shipped right away if enrolling in a course beginning in October.

Other posts include motivation, studying psychology, AU website issues, getting duplicate course receipts, AU's Writer-in-Residence presentation, convocation, and courses ADMN 232, IDRL, SOCI 287, and WGST 499.

Twitter

@AthabascaU tweets: "#AthaU Writer in Residence @JohnVaillant lecture from last week is now available to stream: <http://ow.ly/bBWk30b8tAv>."

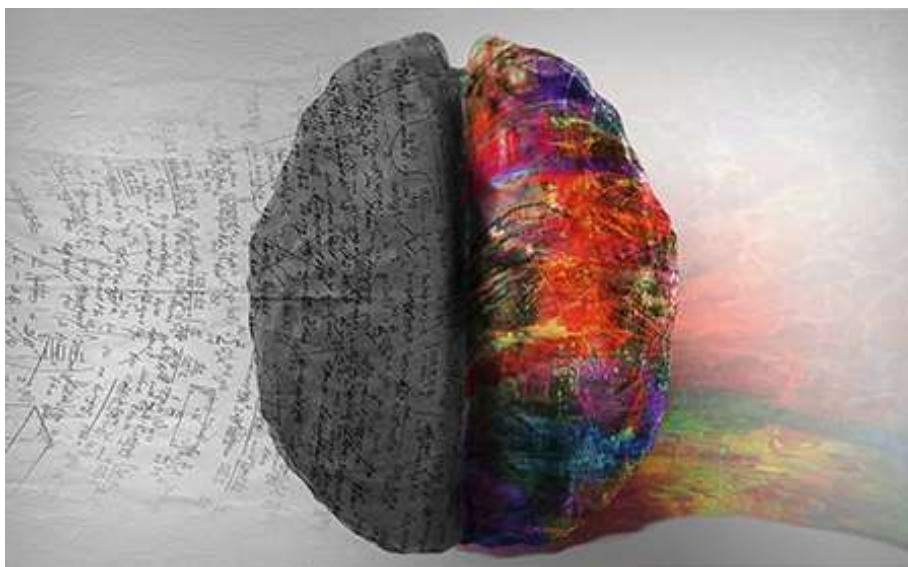
@AthabascaUSU (AUSU) tweets: "Our AUSU VPX recently came back from a CASA conference. Find out more at <http://bit.ly/2op6PQY>."

@AthabascaUBiz tweets: "Is your future financially sound? Do you have a plan? Join #AthaUBiz for a free #FinancialPlanning webinar May 17: <https://goo.gl/wDXhx3>."



Books and Bookkeeping

Deanna Roney



Tax season us upon us again. I dread this time of year; it feels like a final exam for me. But, I also tend to lean the way of getting them in, and done, as soon as possible. It allows me to file 2016 away and the stress is over, and whether the answers are good or bad, either way, I have them, and I'm no longer wondering. My preference in life is words over numbers—actually, most things over numbers. Bookkeeping can be monotonous, I transpose numbers and then wonder why I don't balance by \$0.01. It is time-

consuming and frustrating to go looking for that penny. But, in the world of numbers, it has to be done, it can't just be "close enough."

Bookkeeping is a definite side step from my usual day-to-day work. But the more I learn about it, work on it, and become familiar with it the less I hate it. It has become a break for me. A time to switch my brain over from creative work to analytical work. The change can be rewarding, I feel refreshed after a day or two of bookkeeping when I move back to my creative work. It gives me time to really shut down that part of my brain. When I am working on the books my mind doesn't (can't) drift. I am focused and the creative side is completely shut down, giving it much needed rest.

I think there is something to the saying of keeping variety. While I wouldn't want to work with numbers to the extent I do words, I do enjoy the few days reprieve it gives me. I enjoy the "one answer" as opposed to the "many answers". With bookkeeping, I am done when everything balances to zero. If it doesn't balance then I am not done and I need to go hunting for something I missed. It is easily defined and while it is sometimes frustrating, it has a definite answer. Writing does not. There is no balanced zero at the end of an essay, article, or book to tell you you're done. You must trust your instincts, your work. There is second guessing in yourself, whereas, in the former, there isn't—you are right, or you are wrong.

As the years pass and I become more comfortable with the methods of bookkeeping I have even taken the leap from a paper and pencil synoptic to an accounting program. With the basics learned through the manual methods, I have a better understanding and can move it to the program which makes things much easier (so far) when it comes to transposing numbers, forgetting a row, or plunking the numbers into the wrong column. I am finding that these two jobs complement each other, the bookkeeping allows me to work on writing, but more than that it gives my brain the freedom to shut down, to recharge, and to work in new ways. Bookkeeping keeps me fresh and keeps my eye for detail sharp. If I can find that lost penny in a sea of numbers, I can spot that sentence that isn't quite right or that comma that's out of place.

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

Canadian Education News

Scott Jacobsen



Canadian school boards a bit under fire

The Globe and Mail reported that the Ontario Public School Boards provide an explanation on their website on the "archaic entities" 'even existing in 2017.' The explainer describes the indispensable role of the school trustees in the protection of Canadian democratic heritage.

"The truth is that most school boards offer a sorry spectacle of Canadian democracy in action. They cannot even govern themselves," The Globe and Mail said, "much less look out for the students in their charge. They are plagued by petty ideological battles, personality conflicts, incivility

and sheer incompetence."

One issue is low turnout when voting in school board elections allows for the mobilization of friends, relatives, and others to be enough to allow a person "to become a trustee." The article asserts a seat won with the backing of a church group or a teachers' union can guarantee a lifetime seat on the board.

Payroll education a highlight at the CPA celebration of certifications

Canadian News Wire printed a press release from the Canadian Payroll Association (CPA). The CPA considers education a priority, and development of professional capacities and knowledge is important to the CPA.

The CPA recognizes educational accomplishments of "its Payroll Compliance Practitioner (PCP) and Certified Payroll Manager (CPM) graduates and alumni." There was also celebration for an additional 1,000+ PCPs and CPMs.

The previous roster was over 13,500 CPMs and PCPs. "...this June 13-16, at the CPA's 35th National Conference and Trade Show in Niagara Falls, Ontario, the Association will host the first ever Education Awards luncheon for its delegates."

Secularism in publicly funded schools can be at the detriment of minority faiths

The Toronto Star, in an opinion piece, said, "If the true intent is for our schools to be secular, we would move toward one publicly funded system in which all the major religious holidays of our students are recognized and celebrated."

This is in response to the current controversy over prayer in schools especially with the Peel District School Board. The opinion piece says religious accommodations in Canada have an "acrimonious history." One religious minority asks for accommodation and the "chorus of opposition" demands secularism.

This is seen as a means to maintain the Christian majority as many accommodations have already been made to Christians with respect to holidays and other practices in schools. With the current anti-Muslim paranoia, according to the Toronto Star, the prior public ire over Sikhs, such as how in the early 1990s, many Canadians

were in an uproar over the decision to allow Sikh cadet, Baltej Dhillon Singh to wear a turban as part of his RCMP uniform, is "instructive."

\$90 million committed to help Indigenous students

"In Budget 2017, we saw some concrete steps in the right direction. In addition to support for skills and employment training and funding to improve housing conditions for Indigenous people off-reserve, the budget offers welcome funding that helps clear the way for more Indigenous students to access post-secondary education," the Vancouver Sun said.

Fewer Indigenous students—First Nations, Métis, and Inuit—have postsecondary degrees compared to non-Indigenous pupils. The national rate of accreditation is 26%. Whereas, the Indigenous rate is less than 10%.

It is more of an economic than a social justice issue. To build the prosperous future, postsecondary education for Indigenous students is important. The new budget commits \$90 million to the Post-Secondary Student Support Program under Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada.

Canada aims to be an innovation hub

Montreal Gazette reports that, "The Government of Canada values the role of post-secondary institutions as they help equip young Canadians with the education and training they need for future careers that will help them join a strong, healthy middle class."

There was a recent investment in the Saskatchewan Indian Institute of Technologies (SIIT) to give training allowing access to the middle-class jobs, which came to \$1.97 million. The Canadian Innovation and Skills Plan wants to create a country capable of innovation, of being a "global centre for innovation."

To be a hub for innovation in the world, Canada will need to be a place for job creation, growth across industries, and with the improvements in the livelihoods of Canadian citizens. The SIIT investment is part of this vision.

Muted federal responses on promises and Truth and Reconciliation Commission and promises

The Globe and Mail, in an article by Tracy Bear, director of the Indigenous Women's Resilience Project in the Faculty of Native Studies, and Chris Andersen, who is interim dean of the Faculty of Native Studies at the University of Alberta, stated that the 150th anniversary of Canada is an important year for Canada.

2017 is a point for reflection as a country. It is also the 3rd anniversary for the finishing of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. "Two years ago, the TRC released its final report and 94 calls to action to 'redress the legacy of residential schools and advance the process of Canadian reconciliation.'"

With the celebrations, there is "vigorous debate" in Canada over the federal government promises to the Indigenous population of Canada and the "what might charitably be termed the muted delivery on those promises."

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

Living with Lupus as a Student

Tara Howse



I'm a registered disability student. Just over a year ago, I was diagnosed with systemic lupus erythematosus (better known as lupus). An autoimmune disease, one of the effects that has been most difficult for me to manage, as a student, is my mental stamina. I do not have the ability to sit and study for hours at a time. After about 2 hours my brain has become overworked, and I must step away and relax.

There are at least 80 autoimmune diseases, some of which you've heard of (such as rheumatoid arthritis, type 1 diabetes, multiple sclerosis, celiac disease, psoriasis, and Chron's

disease). Very simply, an autoimmune disease is the result of your immune system going haywire and not reacting in the manner it is supposed to—protecting the body from foreign invaders. Instead, the immune system has turned on itself and is attacking and damaging tissues using antibodies that are usually reserved for fighting infections. Each autoimmune disorder is quite varied but there are also many commonalities across them. Most cause extreme fatigue and mimic the feeling of having a flu and fever (with or without the standard gastro unpleasanties). You know that feeling of being exhausted while you're ill? Your entire body has been wiped of energy from fighting the infection. Those of us with autoimmune diseases regularly feel like that, except instead of recovering from an illness, simple daily activities can trigger it, such as a shower or making dinner. The body is constantly fighting itself, using its energy stores to fight the "invader", which, of course, is you.

I can't speak for every autoimmune disease but I can speak to my manifestation of lupus (it differs from person to person). Lupus has the potential to attack nearly any part of the body (hence, the "systemic" part of the name). It can attack joints, nerves, kidneys, lungs, brain, skin, mouth, and hair. For me, it first presented (and later diagnosed) as an extreme and rapid form of rheumatoid arthritis. Formerly a very active person, I was barely able to make it from my couch to the bathroom or up and down the 6 steps to my house, while the summer prior, I had been hiking the California section of the PCT (1700 miles = ~20+miles/day). My daily regular activities used to include mountain biking and hiking in the summer, and downhill and backcountry skiing in the winter—not anymore.

Lupus then attacked my skin (with rashes), hair (which started falling out in clumps), kidneys (that got nephritis), and lungs (that started to fill with fluid). I also developed a blood clot (pulmonary embolism), and fatigue. Called a "flare", my antibodies decided to wreak havoc on nearly every part of me. I was put on mega doses of immunosuppressants and steroids (thankfully, I narrowly avoided the chemotherapy treatment) with the goal to calm my immune system down and force it into "remission". Remission—a beautiful term for many of us "lupies". Depending on where you look and how your body reacts, remission can be an expected outcome, with the possibility of never experiencing a flare again. On the other end of the spectrum, many people never get away from their symptoms. The reality is that most of us end up in the middle, learning what "triggers" will set them off and learning how to manage those flares as they start. Whatever point of remission a person ends up at, it's necessary to remember that there is no cure. I will have lupus for the rest of my life.

Although there is no definitive answer as to what causes a person to develop lupus—the mystery surrounding autoimmune diseases is vast—one documented trigger for a flare is stress. There is a lot of chatter within the autoimmune world about the need to listen to and respect your body. Don't ignore the little irritants and warning signs or symptoms because it can result in a flare, devastating your life. Most importantly, **pay attention to your stress levels.**

How, then, does one limit stress while enrolled in multiple courses and study to stay on schedule, also while maintaining work, home, and volunteer responsibilities? It's not easy, and I'm still learning. Life is dynamic, constantly changing, and so my learning will need to remain fluid and adapt as those changes occur.

Alas! I will end this week's article here (I've been sitting for far too long – one my learnings) and delve into my further stress management techniques next week.

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



You Know You're an AU Student When..

Barbara Lehtiniemi

Each AU student believes they are unique—and that's probably true. However, there are some traits that many of us share. Traits which bind us together while separating us from the herd of "ordinary" university students. It's not just the isolation that binds us. There's a whole basketful of quirks all our own. Here are a few:

You know you're an AU student when...

- you feel a *frisson* of excitement when you receive a box of AU course materials in the mail. "Oooh! Textbooks!"
- you can't wait for the first of the month to begin studying and, what's more, you don't have to,
- your study attire places comfort over fashion; clothing is comfortable, optional, and pyjamas are preferred,
- you have strong views on e-texts—there is no middle ground,
- you sincerely believe you will have time to study on your vacation,
- your study buddy is furry, four-legged, and sleeps on top of your textbook, keyboard, or lap, depending on which is more inconvenient,
- you feel compelled to post photos of your furry study buddy sitting on your keyboard/textbook on social media,

- you stalk the social media profiles of other AU students, desperately hoping to spot someone from your own community,
- you prefer to post study questions on Facebook instead of contacting your tutor,
- you spend more time avoiding an essay than writing it,
- you spend more time compulsively checking for marks than you did writing the essay/studying for the exam,
- your butt cheeks don't automatically clench when you see the term ProctorU,
- you can recite your student number from memory,
- you've shouted "Not now, Mommy/Daddy is STUDYING!" to keep the kids out of your hair while you binge on Netflix,
- technical glitches and wifi outages prompt you to go into shrieking meltdown mode,
- you believe yourself when you swear you'll never leave an assignment to the last week of the contract ever again,
- you've gotten tired of explaining that Athabasca University is located in the place it's named for and started answering the question "And where *is* Athabasca University?" with random locations like Vulcan, Punkeydoodles Corners, or Dildo (but aren't you glad it's not really in Dildo?),
- you think "I don't know" is a perfectly reasonable answer to the question "When will you graduate?"
- you get teary-eyed if you happen to meet another AU human,
- you thought of at least two traits missing from this list, and
- you think you'll e-mail your thoughts on the missing traits to *The Voice Magazine* but will forget as soon as you leave this page.

What did we miss? Share your quirky AU traits with The Voice Magazine at voice@voicemagazine.org. Do it now.

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

Scholarship of the Week

Digging up scholarship treasure for AU students.

Scholarship name: Global Teletherapy Academic Excellence Award

Sponsored by: Global Teletherapy

Deadline: May 15, 2017

Potential payout: \$1000

Eligibility restriction: Applicants must be enrolled in college or university during the 2017-2018 academic year and have a cumulative GPA of at least 3.0.

What's required: Contact and student info, unofficial transcript, and a 2000-word essay explaining the importance of bettering one's community. Apply by e-mail.

Tips: Read the "[Helpful Hints for the Essay](#)" for valuable tips.

Where to get info: globalteletherapy.com/scholarship/





"Outside" Behaviour

I love CTV's Marilyn Denis Show because of Marilyn herself and her panel of regular experts. Among those is nutritionist, Julie Daniluk. Her bubbling enthusiasm and healthy vibrancy today belie decades of food allergies, infections, food poisonings, and a near death experience in Thailand. The years-long journey to heal herself is now being shared through her books, public appearances, website, and sheer zealotry.

Because we know inflammation is a huge health risk, I bought her *Meals that Heal Inflammation* book a few years ago. It made sense but seemed to be so damn onerous to follow especially if one wasn't suffering an imminent health crisis. To paraphrase what my hero, Jim Rohn used to say: "no one falls down ill after eating the first Mars bar. What if eating an apple a day does keep the doctor away?" The point being that poor choices are cumulative and have a way of sneaking up on us and making small adjustments can make a positive difference.

Like with much new information in our lives, when the student is ready the teacher will appear. I added flags to the pages of recipes that sounded good and didn't need a million, hard-to-access ingredients or have fourteen steps in the method. I don't recall if I ever tried a single one. Yet.

Yet, when I saw Julie's latest book, *Hot Detox*, I bought it. Detox sounded like a short-term, easier to succeed at venture. I read the entire book, marked promising recipes, and accessed online extras like a shopping list and more recipes. Secretly I also liked that Julie's Ukrainian roots snuck into some recipes. The book is based on modern science plus the ancient wisdom of Ayurveda and Chinese medicine, both of which intrigue me.

I haven't (yet) scheduled a 3, 10, or 21-day detox because of my busyness and an uncooperative husband. But I have tried countless recipes and, without fail, loved them. So has hubby. This journey of discovery has led to more adventures: more spices, more veggies, more slicing and dicing.

It would seem I've been a pretty boring cook who's stuck in a rut cooking the same old food in the same old ways. My blender has seen more action in the past two weeks than in the year previous. I resurrected canning jars because glass is far safer than plastic for storing anything. I've made batches of vegan soup broth; roasted spaghetti and butternut squashes; mixed up a batch of curry spices; did chia this and that; switched to pink (and grey) rock salt; stopped coffee; made ginger tea; shopped mindfully.

None of it has been difficult. I had most of the good stuff already. It has taken time though. It seems I spend whole days chopping. The crazy thing is I like it. It feels right. And righteous. It's meditative and worth the effort. My palate is evolving.

Of course, I don't know what is happening inside but so far, I love how the "outside" behaviour has changed, 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

Weighty Issues

Dear Barb:

My sister is one year older than me and we were close while we were younger, but now we rarely talk. I find her anger and rage extremely hard to deal with. After these outbursts she always calls me to apologize and says it was a temporal lobe seizure. I had never heard of a seizure being like that. I thought she was just making excuses for her rude behavior. I decided to keep my distance since I thought she had some type of mental disorder. One day I came across a book about temporal lobe seizures. I read the book and discovered my sister was right, these are temporal lobe seizures. Of course, I felt awful for not being more understanding so I called her up and told her that I read the book and I understand. She was relieved, but I still don't think I can deal with her. She becomes enraged and downright mean, am I a bad person for not being able to deal with this? Feeling guilty, René.

Hi René;

Thanks so much for sharing your situation. You are correct Temporal Lobe Seizures are not what you think of when you think of a seizure. An excellent book about this condition is "Seized: Temporal Lobe Epilepsy as a Medical, Historical and Artistic Phenomenon." This may have been the book that you read. This condition mimics a mental illness, but it is not, it originates from a scar on the brain, possibly from a car accident or other injury to the brain. Understanding this does not make it any easier for you to deal with your sister. When she does have these fits maybe you can walk away and not take it personally. If you can't deal with it, then there is nothing else you

can do. Try to spend time with her when she is not seizing, that's pretty well all you can do.

Dear Barb:

Hi, my wife and I have been married for five years. She has put on a lot of weight, probably about fifty pounds. I hate to say this but I don't find her attractive or desirable. I still love her, but all she does is eat junk and she never exercises. She basically sits in front of the TV all day munching on snacks. When I suggest we go for a walk she makes excuses why she can't go, so I end up going by myself. How can I discuss my wife's weight without it causing an irreparable rift in our relationship? Thanks, Tony.

Hey Tony:

My first impulse would be to ask if she has been checked out for depression. Does the extra weight bother her? I guess you can approach her from a health perspective. Suggest she go to her family physician and get a complete check up. Hopefully her doctor will bring up the topic of her weight and recommend that she would benefit from losing a few pounds. This way she will not be angry with you. It's easy to put on a few pounds a year and then find you are stuck with a lot of extra weight which is not easy to get rid of. Thanks Tony

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.

The Nonpartisan in: A Political What?

I'm APOLITICAL! I don't think the government should control us!

But that IS political!

It's libertarianism!

Not at all!

I just think we can govern ourselves! We don't need laws!

That's political, too! It's called "anarchy!"

Naw, that just sounds crazy!

We should be running society like a well-oiled machine— get rid of all the deadbeats!

You idiot, can't you see that's political, too?

You're a fascist!

I can't be! The Nazis were fascists!

AHA!

That means you're anti-fascist.

Admit it! You're political!

Not in a million years! This way no one can nail me for hypocrisy!

WRITTEN BY 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.

CASA 2017 Annual General Meeting

AUSU's VP External and Student Affairs, Julian Teterenko, recently returned from the Annual General Meeting of the Canadian Alliance of Students' Associations ([CASA](#)), which was held in Halifax. The AGM was centered on proposals designed to increase CASA's advocacy reach, expand its public facing policy solutions, and reform its internal workings.

A few highlights from the AGM include:

- Approved partnership with UEQ (Union etudiante du Quebec) to represent shared interests to the federal government.
- New Alumni Council filled with ex-delegates and staff members to help advise CASA's membership.
- New Member Relations Committee responsible for overseeing and improving the quality of relations CASA has with its members.
- Approval of a process for CASA's members to propose and approve advocacy campaigns.
- Approval of numerous policy papers which will be publicly released over the next several months.
- Numerous policy amendments.
- End-of-year awards.
- Approval of a balanced 2018 budget
- "Build-a-Foundations" activity to help plan CASA's 2017 Foundations Conference schedule.

AUSU is proud to be a continuing member of CASA, which helps AU students have a voice at the national level.

Contact ausu@ausu.org if you have any questions.



IMPORTANT DATES

- **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 June 1](#)
- **May 14:** [AUSU Council Meeting](#)
- **May 15:** [June degree requirements deadline](#)
- **May 28:** [Deadline to apply for course extension for July](#)

Last chance to apply for AUSU's Awards and Bursaries!

The deadline is MAY 1 for numerous AUSU awards and bursaries – AUSU has over \$15,000 to give away to successful applicants!

Apply online [here](#). DEADLINE: MAY 1.



AUSU
Awards &
Bursaries
Deadline
MAY 1

Convocation 2017

AU Convocation 2017 is just around the bend, and it is an exciting opportunity to meet AU staff and faculty in person, visit the beautiful AU campus, and walk across the stage to get acknowledged for the hard work and dedication you put into obtaining your degree.

If you want to graduate in time to attend Convocation 2017, the deadline to apply is **April 30**, and the deadline to finish all course requirements is **May 5**.

Find out more on the AU website [here](#).



CLASSIFIEDS

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

THE VOICE

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