

THE VOICE

MAGAZINE

Vol 25 Issue 26 2017-06-30

Minds We Meet!

Interviewing Students Like You!

Good Bylaws Make Good Neighbours

Or do they?

Save Summer: Avoid Jet Lag

Tips and Tricks

*Plus:
Council Connection
A Closer Look at Some Diets
and much more!*



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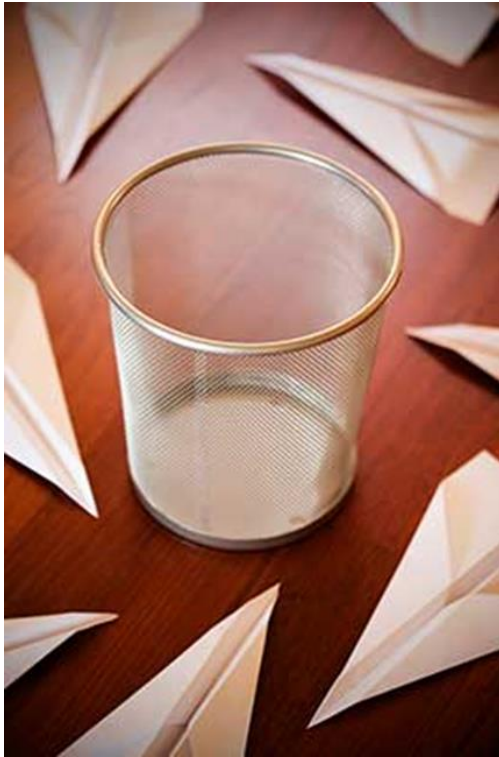
LETTERS TO THE EDITOR



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

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

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

EDITORIAL**A Low-Key Celebration****Karl Low**

Canada, as I'm sure you're aware, is turning 150 years old this Canada Day. I found it strange, however, that while everybody knows of this sesquicentennial, as they insist on calling it just to make sure we have our spell-checkers on, the actual celebration of it seems pretty low-key. Sure, there are the government sponsored shindigs, the biggest being in Ottawa, of course, but aside from that, there seems to have been very little promotion. Few businesses decorating beyond an extra flag or two, merchandise sparse and most of it just a re-shelving of the general Canada merchandise they have. No huge advertising blitz, not that I've seen anyway, and just not a lot of buzz seems to have built up around this anniversary. You can find more excitement here in Calgary around Stampede, and that happens every year.

Maybe that's part of the reason why almost none of the stories submitted for this week's Voice Magazine, despite it being the one before Canada day, have content related to the holiday. It gets the same mention in here that I seem to be seeing out in the world, a brief acknowledgement that the day is happening, and that's that. I don't think it means Canadians aren't proud, or don't care, but maybe with events elsewhere in the world it just doesn't seem like a good time to

be promoting a lot of rah-rah nationalism. Then again, there are still two days to go, so maybe once Canada Day actually arrives, I'll be proven very wrong.

Regardless, there are some things to celebrate. AU, for instance, has finally hired a permanent Vice-President Academic and Provost, Dr. Matthew Prineas. With the Third Party Review recommending a broad review of AU courses including looking at opportunities to create courses of differing lengths and styles, this position is an extremely important one to bring stability and, as important, a cohesive sense of direction to whatever route AU decides to pursue. With that in mind, I find it comforting that Dr. Prineas' PhD is in English, and to note that he's served as the Vice Provost and director of the Online Writing Centre at the University of Maryland University College (an institution with its own significant distance education program). No offense intended toward those business professors and students out there, but my personal experience is that the business tracks rarely value the liberal arts tracks, especially when it can be difficult to demonstrate how liberal arts skills apply to the employment market after graduation. Having a Provost with a PhD in English lets me breathe a little easier thinking that some of those programs that don't have such obvious employment outcomes will have their champion at the highest levels. Dr. Prineas will be officially starting with the university on September 5, 2017.

Today, however, our feature is our interview with AU student Miranda Braun. From small-town Taber, Alberta, Miranda juggles her AU program with her daughter, and notes how it can be hard to squeeze in family time when studying. We also have Carla Knipe's latest article where she looks at the proliferation of bylaws designed to make neighbourhoods nicer, and questions if the cost of those is making it less likely the neighbours themselves will get along. Plus, advice on life, creating metaphors for your papers, and a look at the differences in some common food-restrictive diets, artist interviews, finding ways to use "lost" time, and how to keep your summer travel from becoming summer jet lag!

So I hope you enjoy your Canada day, and while you're at it, enjoy the read!

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

MINDS WE MEET



Miranda Braun is an AU Bachelor of Professional Arts – Human Services student currently living in Lethbridge, Alberta. Prior to AU, she studied at Lethbridge College, earning her diploma in Rehabilitation Services. She grew up in Taber, Alberta which is a small town about 30 minutes away from Lethbridge and known for their corn and annual "Cornfest" event.

What parts do you like about online learning?

I love learning new things and growing as a person. I also like that the skills I build also help me in my current career. I enjoy having goals to reach- it's really gratifying

What do you dislike about online learning?

Being on the computer a lot, and missing out on face-to-face instruction from a teacher. I find that information sinks in much better when coming from a real person and hearing their stories.

What has been your favourite or most memorable AU course?

At this point I have only taken 6 classes and completed a PLAR portfolio, but my favorite class has been Risk Assessment and Threat Management (CRJS 493). I found it really interesting and informative.

Describe your relationship with AU tutors.

My relationship with tutors is usually quite casual. I ask questions about assignments or to get feedback on my work.

How do you motivate yourself when it comes to studying?

I set aside time every weekend to work on school work. I only take one class at a time, so it is usually easy to manage.

What do you like to snack on while studying?

I don't really snack while I'm studying, but usually drink coffee or tea. I take cream in my coffee and milk and sugar in my tea. Might need to switch to something cold now that summer is coming.

What is your third favorite chocolate bar? Why?

I love all chocolate bars equally! My top 3 would probably be Dairy Milk, Crunchie, and Reese Peanut Butter cups

What is your favorite book and why should everyone read it?

I am really enjoying Chevy Steven's novels right now. I love reading crime, drama, and horror novels.

Book or movie – which is better?

I would have to say books!

Where is the furthest place you have travelled?

Puerto Vallarta, Mexico

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

I would say my daughter. I want to be a positive role model and show her that anything is possible if you put your mind to it.

What is it like to juggle school and being a parent?

Being a parent and a student is hard. I don't want to miss out on anything, yet I know the value of completing my education. There are days where I feel guilty for working on school work, but I do my best to make up for it or manage my time so that it doesn't get in the way of family time. It takes a lot of time management and self-motivation.

What is your mantra in life?

It always seems impossible until it's done

And when you have some free time, how do you like to spend it?

I have to say, I don't have a lot of free time! I like to be physically active, spend time with family, and go to the mountains.

Laura Nelson is a marketing analyst by day and a bibliophile by night. She is in her final stages of completing her BA with a major in English through AU.

Women of Interest

Esther Lederberg was born December 18, 1922, in Bronx, New York, and died November 1, 2006, in Stanford, California. She was an American microbiologist who led the way in bacterial genetics. Lederberg is best known for her collaboration with her first husband who won the Nobel Prize for Physiology or Medicine for discoveries on how bacteria mate. One of Lederberg's greatest discoveries was that of Lambda phage which is a virus that infects E. coli bacteria. Lambda phage has quickly become widely used in the study of genetic recombination and gene regulation. Esther Lederberg authored and coauthored several notable publications.

Further information on Esther Lederberg may be found at the following websites:

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

<http://schaechter.asmblog.org/schaechter/2014/07/esther-lederberg-pioneer-of-bacterial-genetics.html>

<http://news.stanford.edu/news/2006/november29/med-esther-112906.html>

<http://www.estherlederberg.com/Papers.html>

Good Bylaws Make Good Neighbours Or Do They?

Carla Knipe



Summer is when Canadians come out of winter hibernation and enjoy the warm weather. Especially in urban areas, people see their neighbours a lot more. Kids are out riding bikes or playing on the streets and adults are out mowing their lawn or barbecuing on the deck. But does this equate to a sense of neighbourliness? Can people, especially in crowded urban centres, really get along with each other? Could they just pop next door to ask for "a cup of sugar" or trust someone to look after their house while they are on vacation? Or is it more that, these days, we just come home from work, shut the garage door

and retreat inside to our own little kingdom without getting to know the people on the other side of the fence?

We would all like to think that a sense of neighbourliness still exists, especially in Canada—because we are friendly Canadians, eh. People tend to have an ideal view of neighbourhoods—and neighbours—that nostalgically harken back to when close-knit communities were the norm, not the exception. After all, an innate part of our humanity is connection with others and to be social. Shouldn't neighbourliness come naturally? More and more, the answer seems to be "no." Even in small towns, there appears to be a prevailing element of mistrust about others and a spirit of conformity and toeing the line. Neighbourliness is enforced not by a societal ideal but by a formal code of conduct that residents must adhere to—or else face fines and other punishments. These "Good Neighbour Guides" or "Good Neighbour Bylaws" are becoming the norm, not the exception, and not just in Canada but also in the United States and other countries.

On the surface, these bylaws look like they are a good idea. They are designed to prevent neighbours from irritating each other through unwelcome behaviors like blasting music through the night or letting unlicensed dogs and cats run free. These laws are often created with health and safety in mind. After all, people don't want to fall on icy sidewalks because someone doesn't want to shovel them, or have smoke from backyard fire pits wafting through their windows.

Good neighbour bylaws come with enforcement by municipal officers; often brought by a tip-off from a neighbor who has complained. After a complaint is made, residents receive an infraction notice and are given a period of time to rectify the problem. If the issue isn't addressed, then the result is most often a fine, but can also lead to formal mediation or even a court summons.

The main argument for the necessity of Good Neighbour laws is that they act as a framework of clear guidelines to resolve disputes between property owners. But there are problems with this. The biggest one is that a small proportion of people have no interest in conforming to municipal laws. They believe it is their right to do whatever they want, and they don't care about what anyone else thinks, and no amount of enforcement threats will change that mindset. This is more common than people think, judging from the popularity of online forums

such as [Neighbours From Hell](#) and <http://www.annoyingneighbors.com/>. The people who just aren't interested in conforming to laws and/or reforming their behavior become a huge problem for others around them who do.

There are also unintended consequences for Good Neighbour laws. What often happens is that municipalities start out with just a basic set of rules and regulations, but tend to add more and more bylaws, to the point where many people just don't know what they really are and become increasingly petty. Take Calgary for example. Here are just a few of the bylaws contained in the Good Neighbour Guide, which is 47 pages long. Some of the contents are mere suggestions, but other points contained in the guide are enforceable laws. Some examples: water is not allowed to run down the street or sidewalk when watering your lawn, snow or ice removed from private property must not be thrown on the public road or boulevard, recreational vehicles must not be parked outside of a house for more than 24 hours, and grass and weeds outside residences should not be more than 15 centimetres high. There are even more rules found on the City of Calgary website. Can any resident really know and abide by all the city bylaws? And Calgary is by no means a rare example of municipalities being all too keen on creating and enforcing these laws. But sometimes, the only time people are aware of them is when an enforcement officer visits their property.

There is growing evidence that the proliferation of these "Good Neighbour Laws" have the opposite effect of creating a sense of neighbourliness. Instead, they make people more mistrustful of each other and the place they live. What law experts are seeing is that bylaws can be an excuse to make complaints against neighbours or punish a disliked neighbour. There has been a sharp increase in legal disputes arising from complaints by one neighbour toward another when the evidence is sketchy or even unprovable.

One Calgary resident, who wishes her name not to be used, experienced this first-hand. After the relationship with her next-door neighbour turned sour (she does not know why, especially when he works out of town for much of the year), he began making complaints about her family. He called bylaw services over twenty times for a myriad of complaints that resulted in police and bylaw officers making over a dozen visits to her home. The complaints ranged from "tip offs" about an illegal basement suite (which they don't have, as their basement is unfinished) to putting landscaping rock on his side of his property boundary (the rock turned out to be on his side of his unfenced side-yard by an inch), and complaining that her dog ran through the neighbourhood unleashed. He took five photos of the dog right behind her fence in a public green patch which the dog used to go to the bathroom on, but then came straight inside the house. Because of the photos, bylaw could have fined her \$500 but instead "only" fined them \$100. She made a counter-complaint about the constant harassment, but did not receive any word on whether her complaint was upheld. Needless to say, the two neighbours are no longer on speaking terms.

So does neighbourliness mean that municipalities have increasing say over residents' lives? That in appearing to create a sense of harmony, the laws are instead creating disharmony? This is something that the Canadian Constitution Foundation (<https://theccf.ca>) is examining. It is finding that these bylaws don't solve communication problems, they create them. Rather than encouraging residents to talk over any disputes with each other, they just give people an easy out and an escape route versus letting neighbours talk things through and come to an understanding. People shouldn't have to take a tape measure to their lawns to measure the foliage or gauge the decibels of their guests' chatter at summer gatherings to remain on the right side of their neighbours and the law. Good Neighbour Bylaws are creating an entire industry in our towns and cities as call centre staff and officers are hired to investigate complaints and enforce the bylaws. The amount of money, often taxpayer funded, that neighbour disputes cost in legal fees is not calculated but is thought to be increasing at an exponential level.

So where does it all end? The truth is, no one knows. But there is an antidote to all the pettiness between neighbours: just taking the time to get to know each other and getting back to those social skills that seem to be missing from

modern interactions. This is just as true of suburban neighbours as it is for people who live in urban high-rise condominiums. If we really have a sense of wistful nostalgia about neighbourliness, we can try to recapture that and create a new sense of what being a good neighbour is all about.

In Calgary, home to so many bylaws, there is a new municipal day designed to do just that. The third Saturday in June has been designated as Neighbour Day. It was created to commemorate the 2013 flood that hit Calgary hard but brought out the best in people, as they rallied around each other in crisis. Neighbour Day encourages Calgarians to throw block parties, picnics, and backyard barbecues to get to know their neighbours better. Neighbour Day has been picking up momentum since its inception four years ago, but only time will tell whether the spirit of Neighbour Day has a lasting effect.

The challenge for any of us, then, during the summer of Canada's sesquicentennial, is to take the time to get to know our neighbours. Who knows, they might even invite you over to their backyard barbecue or join in with a pick-up game of street hockey.

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



A Closer Look at Vegetarianism, Gluten-free, and Vegan Diets

Xin Xu



Without covering the entire spectrum of diets ranging from the paleo diet (aka the caveman diet), to the Atkins diet (focusing on carbohydrate intake), there's three predominant nutritional ideologies we should all be aware of, regardless of whether we abide by them.

Let's start with vegetarianism. Simple enough, vegetarians are just human herbivores, right? Not quite. Not all vegetarians are alike. Whereas lacto-vegetarians do not consume white or red meat including fish, fowl, or eggs, ovo-vegetarians consume egg products. While

both groups turn away from red or white meat, they derive protein from different sources. Other less strict vegetarians choose to reduce meat consumption rather than eliminate it altogether. These diets create flexibility for the individual. After all, who can resist the allure of smoked bacon?

Then there are gluten-free diets. We often associate gluten-free diets with people with celiac disorder. But this isn't always the case. Some individuals are turning to gluten-free diets as a hip trend. According to studies from 2009-2010, the number of gluten-free individuals increased three-fold! Thus far, there is little evidence to show health-benefits of gluten-free diets for individuals without celiac disorder. Lebowhl et al (2017) even demonstrated lack of gluten might interfere with cardiovascular health. Moreover, gluten-free diets are costly without substantial long-term benefits. The only justification for a gluten-free lifestyle lies in individuals living with celiac disease whereby small amounts of gluten may cause adverse effects.

Finally, think of the vegan diet like a more radical version of vegetarianism and closer to the human herbivore. Vegan diets consist of a solely plants, neglecting the dairy products vegetarians consume. Compared to meat-eaters, fish-eaters and vegetarians, vegans have the lowest BMI, lower plasma cholesterol and mortality from cardiovascular disease (Key, 1999). However, the downside to such diet lies in the rigor of consuming only plants. To derive the same nutrients non-vegans obtain from meat, milk, or egg protein, vegans utilize an assortment of nuts, beans, and fortified carbohydrates. The assumption that vegans are always healthier doesn't hold up if there is a lack of variety in fruits, vegetables, and plant-based products. Like any diet, diversity and balance is key.

With the three common food-isms out of the way, you might feel more confident sampling various dietary regimes. But aside from these three, there are hundreds of diets that might satisfy your unique health needs. While these diets might seem confining, an easier alternative is to start thinking about the ingredients we consume, and ensuring we have at minimum a well-balanced diet. Just some food for thought. Starting with baby steps, by first reducing trans-fat intake found in fast-food and then progressing to more challenging goals, such as eliminating red meat altogether may work to transition dietary changes. A TED-inspired lifestyle movement is taking hold where individuals take on something new for 30 days. It has given me the opportunity to start everything from indoor rock-climbing to starting my own food blog. If there's a bandwagon you're dying to hop on, it would be this one. Trying a different cuisine or cleansing your palette with vegetarian diet just might be your cup of tea.

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Xin Xu is a post-graduate health-science AU student, aspiring clinician, globe-trotter, parrot-breeder and tea-connoisseur.

Student Sizzle AU's Hot Social Media Topics

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



AthaU Facebook Group

Megan seeks info on completing courses through other schools for AU credit. Kari wonders in what ways a supplemental exam differs from a regular exam. Manuela asks if washroom breaks are permitted during a ProctorU exam.

Other posts include the rush of excitement one gets from enrolling in a new course, travelling graduates, and courses ACCT 454, FNCE 370, and PYSC 290.

reddit

User Rjfgidrt asks if AU is accredited/recognized in Australia and New Zealand.

Twitter

@AthabascaU tweets: "Very excited to announce [#AthaU](#)'s new Provost & Vice-President, Academic! Welcome to [@mprineas](#)! <http://ow.ly/lquw30cX7oo> [#cdnpse](#) [#higherred](#)."

@AthabascaUSU (AUSU) tweets: "AUSU council recently held a great working retreat in Athabasca - read all about it and check out some great pics at <http://bit.ly/2t2Sk6X>."

Save Summer: Avoid Jet Lag

Barbara Lehtiniemi



Summer has arrived, and many students—even online ones—will be on the move. You might be travelling to an exotic destination, visiting family, or exploring Canada coast-to-coast. If you're heading east or west, you might cross one or more time zones. Time zone-hopping can prompt that other traveller's scourge: jet lag.

Jet lag is a disruption to your body's natural circadian rhythm and results from travelling long latitudinal distances quickly—jumping from one time zone to another without adequate time to adjust. Despite its name, jet lag is not exclusive to the flying public—it's

possible to experience jet lag travelling by car or train, too.

How jet lag will affect any individual depends on several factors. The most influential factor is how many time zones are crossed. Adjusting to a 12-hour time shift is more difficult than for a 2-hour shift. Direction of travel is a factor too. Heading east across several time zones is often noticeably worse than heading west. Other contributing factors are time of year and the traveller's state of physical fitness.

Jet lag produces symptoms of tiredness, irritability, headaches, reduced ability to concentrate, as well as disruption to sleep and eating schedules. The severity of symptoms varies from person to person: two people travelling together may not experience the same degree of jet lag.

There are a number of strategies for reducing the effects of jet lag. With some advance preparation, you can bounce back quickly from the journey and spend more time enjoying the destination. Here are a few jet lag reducing strategies:

Wait it out. The general rule is that you will need one day to fully recover from every hour in time change. If you travel from Vancouver to Halifax, crossing four time zones, you can expect four days until your body's circadian rhythm catches up. Travel from Toronto to Turkey (seven time zones), and you'll need a full week. Letting yourself recover naturally works best when your stay in the new time zone will be lengthy. Remember that you'll need to re-adjust if and when you return to your starting point.

Stay stubbornly in your home zone. If your stay in another time zone will be short, for a weekend getaway or a conference for example, you can try sticking to the time in your home zone. Keep your watch set to your home time and eat and sleep accordingly. When you return home, you'll need minimal re-adjustment. This strategy can be challenging, however, if you're required to follow someone else's schedule for meetings or meals. Be sure to keep "your" time and "their" time straight!

Pre-adjust. A week or so before you leave home, begin a gradual shift toward your destination's time zone. If you'll be travelling east, start eating meals and going to bed increasingly earlier; if you're heading west, shift meals and bedtime later. This strategy can reduce the severity of jet lag because you're reducing the gap

between home time and destination time. A mobile app, such as the Jet Lag App can help plan a schedule of pre-adjustment.

Re-adjust waking. A key element in re-setting your circadian rhythm is sunlight. The first morning you arrive at your destination, force yourself to get up at the hour you usually would. Then get outside for a quick walk. The exposure to natural light will send signals to your body which will help reset your sleep-wake cycle to match the current time zone. Seek out sunlight every morning but avoid bright lights in the evening. A mobile app such as Jet Lag Rooster can help plan your light exposure routine for quick Jet lag re-adjustment.

Re-adjust sleeping. Another strategy to help reset your circadian rhythm is melatonin. Melatonin is a hormone your body produces in response to dim light, which helps ease the body into its sleep cycle. Melatonin tablets can be purchased wherever health supplements are sold in Canada, and are often helpful to counter temporary sleeplessness. One dose of melatonin at bedtime on your first night at your destination may help you get to sleep even though your body hasn't adjusted yet. Melatonin is also helpful to assist with sleeping during travel, such as on an overnight flight. Save melatonin for the rare occasions when you really need it, otherwise its effectiveness may diminish.

Jet lag is an inconvenient and sometimes debilitating side-effect of travelling across time zones. If your summer travel plans include crossing several time zones, then a Jet lag strategy should be a part of your travel plans. Save summer for enjoyment and not recovery.

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



In Conversation ..with Amber Fly

Wanda Waterman



Amber Fly is the Massachusetts-based punk/alt rock band comprised of Kai Daniels Freyleue (guitar, lead vocals), Nathaniel Swanson (lead guitar), Andrew Howard (bass, backup vocals), and Connor Williams (drums). Their sophomore release, the EP Knit Fabrics, is a revitalizing reaction to the horrors currently facing America. Their chaotic songwriting process manages to produce the most amazing songs, voicing clever ideas without pretention and dark thoughts without despair. Recently the band's songwriter, Kai Daniels Freyleue, took the time to talk to us about the band's history, their music, and the difficulty they have coming up with names.

How did Amber Fly begin?

I've been writing songs since I was in the eighth grade. I started playing music with Nathaniel, and the two of us have been the only constant members of the band all the way through high school. We played together and with other bands.

Tell us about your musical background.

I've always been into music. My dad played guitar a lot when I was growing up. (My dad is a trans-woman, so I'll use "she.") She taught me a lot of guitar stuff. We used to listen to music together a lot.

What got me really into playing rock was that Green Day album, *American Idiot*. Then starting in middle school and high school I got into choral stuff and musical theatre. I've listened to a lot of different kinds of music, including rock, hip-hop, death metal, classical, and show tunes.

How did you come up with your album's name?

We tried and tried but just couldn't figure out what to call the album. So we went out and started taking some pictures. Nathaniel took a picture of the Lawrence Knit Fabrics building in Lowell, and we decided to call it "Knit Fabrics."

What about the band's name?

We have a history of not being able to decide on names. We went back and forth about band names all through high school. Connor, who's a big beer drinker, mentioned the word "Amber," because it's the colour of beer. That word stuck with me. A short while after that I hooked up with a girl named Amber, and the band's name literally came to me as I was unzipping her fly. (There was a bit of cannabis influence there.)

How did you write the songs?

These are songs that have really long histories. We've been sort of developing them since high school, and they've gone through all sorts of crazy iterations, "Overkill on Overtime" in particular; the lyrics were just total nonsense I scraped off the top of my head. Eventually I turned it into what it is now.

Any weird stuff happen during recording?

My bassist, Andrew, and I went out for drinks with our girlfriends and got hammered the night before recording. When we woke up to record, I said, "Andrew, I'm not putting on my clothes—I'm going in my pajamas."

After I got there I kept piling on clothes. There's a picture somewhere of me wearing a British shirt, my pajama pants, a Seattle hat, and a Blink-182 hat on top of that.

We recorded the whole EP in one day. Andrew's roommate recorded it for us for one of his school projects.

What's the story behind "Life Force Dry?"

I wrote the original in middle school, during the Bush era. I was like, "Fuck George W. Bush—what a piece of shit." We weren't going to record it, but then last year's election happened. We were all so pissed off at the happenings inside the DNC and what Donald Trump was up to. I said to them, "Guys, this is way too messed up—we gotta record "Life Force Dry."

Tell us about "Daddy's Girl."

I've had a very happy life. My childhood was perfect—couldn't have asked for a better one. But a lot of my songs are really dark, and a lot of that comes from things friends and family members have told me about their lives.

"Daddy's Girl" is based on the story told me by a girl who'd never met her father. She'd wanted to meet him when she turned 18 but he died before that could happen, so she was absolutely furious with her mother for a long time.

What's on the horizon?

Nathaniel's getting married this weekend, but after that we're going to try to record one more EP before he moves to California to start his fancy new bio-tech job. It's gonna suck because I've been working with him for such a long time. We're looking for a replacement guitarist for live shows, but we want to keep him in the band in case he wants to record more stuff with us in the future.

I want our music to be heard by as many people as humanly possible, but of course I want to do that on my own terms; I'm an artist first and foremost. I don't care so much about fame and fortune. I just want my stuff to be heard. And I want my stuff to affect people the way other artists have deeply affected me.

Can you name someone who's deeply affected you?

Jimmy Eat World's 1999 album *Clarity* is the greatest album of the nineties. Be patient with the final song—it's worth it.

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

Scholarship of the Week

Digging up scholarship treasure for AU students.

Scholarship name: GoFetch College Scholarship Fund

Sponsored by: GoFetch

Deadline: August 1, 2017

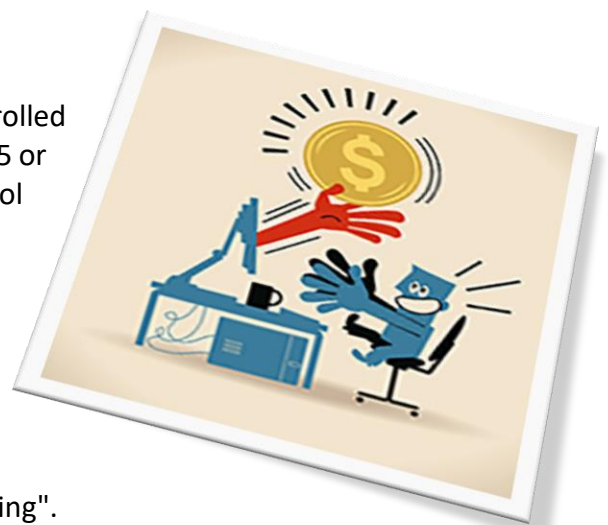
Potential payout: up to \$1000

Eligibility restriction: Applicants must be Canadian residents, enrolled in a Canadian post-secondary institution, and possess a GPA of 2.5 or greater (or an average of C+ or greater, for recent high-school graduates.)

What's required: An essay of 300-500 words on how the humanization of dogs has positively impacted Canadians and their well-being.

Tips: Check out the judging criteria in the "How to Win" section and the essay tips under "Here are a few questions to get you going".

Where to get info: gofetch.ca/collegeScholarshipFund



The Creative Spark!

Brain Hurricanes

Marie Well



Do you think brainstorming makes a difference? At university, I threw in bizarre brainstorm ideas to look quick-witted. Everything goes, right? My professor jotted down my brainstorms, then erased them, squinting and shaking his head. The class howled and heckled, puffed up with one up on the apple shiner.

Today, I glorify lists. Lists for cracking new jokes. Lists for forming first-time metaphors. Lists for hatching unheard-of ads. In short, lists for breaking new ground. So, dig out that shopping list clogging your toilet pipes—'cause I've got four tattered books for you.

I made my brainstorming style from these four first-class authors:

- Pat Pattison, author of *Song-Writing Without Boundaries*;
- Pete Barry, author of *The Advertising Concept Book*;
- and Joe Toplyn, author of *Comedy Writing for Late-Night TV*.
- And now, I add to the list Elizabeth Sims, author of *You've Got a Book in You: A Stress-Free Guide to Writing the Book of Your Dreams*.

Now, let's sift through their list-styles, one-by-one:

First, let's study Pat Pattison:

Pat makes music out of metaphors—literally. Let's tap into his style for metaphor-making. To start, pinpoint a theme, say, a noun like *toilet pipes*. Next, lists traits of toilet pipes. For example, toilet pipes *overflow*. Then, list other things that overflow, such as *traffic*. Then list features of traffic, such as "Rush hour" and "backed up." Now, you've got the guts of a metaphor.

Let's peek at our polished metaphor for "toilet pipes": "Inhale the exhaust of public toilet pipes, overflowing. Rush hour. Stuck seated, buckled, as engines choke and gas runs dry."

Pattison's advice could jazz up your essays with extended metaphors, titles using metaphors, or opening line metaphors.

Now, let's examine Pete Barry:

Pete's a professor of advertising. Here's how he makes mind maps for ads: First, put a product benefit in the middle of a blank page. An example benefit could be "our dark chocolate has a hint of love."

Next, list words related to "a hint of love." For instance, you might refer to heart-red packaging. Or to the love of super sweet super foods. Or to a loved-one cured from cancer through a high-antioxidant (dark chocolate) diet.

Then, circle the ideas ripe with potential. Use them to craft headlines, visuals, and slogans.

For example, take "cure for cancer." Perhaps show a close-up of a mother packing snacks in a pouch. Switch to a long-shot of a teenage girl cancer survivor, cycling a marathon, dripped in sweat, the pouch strapped to her tummy. Zoom in to her fingers pulling out a dark chocolate bar in shiny red wrap. The slogan reads, "a hint of love."

Pete Barry can help your essays answer the "so what?" question. His mind-map tricks also help you craft catchy titles, subtitles, and visuals.

Next, Elizabeth Sims:

Elizabeth writes novels improv style—literally. She says, act like an improv actor when making plots. In other words, start with "What if?" and follow with a "Yes, and" Keep listing "What if?" and "Yes, and ..." scenarios, rejecting nothing.

For instance, you could plot, *What if a cat thought it was human? Yes, and the cat learned to say, "Hello, Mate." Yes, and what if the cat got a shave and a sailor tattoo? Yes, and what if the cat scratched out the captain's only eye?*

Elizabeth Sim's improv style can help you create fiction openers for essays and presentations.

Lastly, let's admire the style of Joe Toplyn:

Joe cracks jokes for late night TV. Better yet, he wrote a comedy book that can fetch you a contract with Conan O'Brien—literally. Joe's approach to brainstorming stands at number one on my top-ten list.

Joe's comedy style? He takes a fact (or even an essay topic) and zeroes in on two of its big ideas. For instance, take the fact "Research shows that yellow, rotten bananas share DNA in common with humans."

From that, you could craft the joke "A study shows that yellow, rotten bananas share DNA in common with humans. After careful consideration, Justin Trudeau now claims that humans evolved from his 70s BFF, Big Bird."

I followed Joe's approach for crafting the joke. To start, I extracted two big ideas from the lead-in (the first sentence of the joke): (1) bananas and (2) human DNA. So, for both bananas and human DNA, I listed words and phrases that came to mind. For "bananas," the words "yellow" and "rotten" came to mind. For "human DNA," I wondered what a yellow, rotten human DNA might create—maybe a man dressed as Big Bird. I added a current event for fun: Justin Trudeau hugging a panda teddy bear on a kid's shows. Seriously, the guys too busy with his puppets to make national policy.

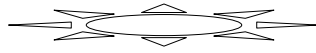
Joe has at least five other ways to craft punchlines. One approach involves taking a fact (or even an essay topic) and asking an obvious question of it. For instance, take the fact "Studies shows that rotten bananas share a small percentage of DNA in common with humans."

From that you could craft the joke, "Studies show that rotten bananas share a small percentage of DNA in common with humans. A further study shows they share 100% with Kim Jong Un." My obvious question for the lead-in was "What *doesn't* share DNA with humans?" The answer? Someone inhuman. Kim Jong Un came to mind.

Joe Toplyn's lists can help you crack jokes for presentations and essay openers—late-night style.

So, now you've got tip-top brainstorming tricks to trail-blaze any idea—for any deed. (Chowder-proof toilet pipes, anyone?)

Best of all, you can jumble together the authors' styles to one up the apple polisher—with brain hurricanes. A paradox? I call it a creative spark!



Canadian Science News

Scott Jacobsen



Cannabis Risk Guidelines Released

"Canada's Lower-Risk Cannabis Use Guidelines, released with the endorsement of key medical and public health organizations," *ScienceDaily* reported, "provide 10 science-based recommendations to enable cannabis users to reduce their health risks. The guidelines, based on a scientific review by an international team of experts, are published in the *American Journal of Public Health*."

Even with the risks associated with cannabis, the guidelines indicate that Canada has one of the highest rates of cannabis use in the world. Over 10% of adults have used marijuana in the past year. More than 25% of adolescents used cannabis in the same time frame.

Some of the reported consequences of cannabis use are problems with physical coordination and memory problems, as well as problems associated with mental health issues and motor vehicle accidents. Canada is moving forward with the federal Cannabis Act. It is an opportunity to "not only to regulate the use and supply, but also to educate and inform cannabis users to prevent or reduce cannabis-related health problems."

Alberta youth brings cow view to global conference

"The 24-year-old from Rocky View, is one of four Canadian agricultural leaders participating in Bayer's Youth Ag Summit in Brussels in October," *Alberta Farm Express* stated. The young male from Rocky View, Cameron Olson, said, "My intent...is to make sure animal agriculture is represented as well as crop."

Born in Calgary, Alberta, Olson is completing a master's degree in animal science at Texas A&M, near Houston, Texas.

The youth summit will be used to discuss potential solutions for feeding a global population of 9 billion people, which is expected to be reached by 2050. This summit is not a first for Olson, who has used his expertise to discuss and work on these problems before.

Kirsty Duncan speaks on sexism in science

Maclean's reports that, "During her time in academia, Kirsty Duncan—now the Liberals' science minister—says she endured constant sexism; she witnessed many more instances of it in the research field." Duncan relayed stories from women scientists about sexism they face too, in 2017.

She reports on this, too, in a *The Globe and Mail* article. Barriers faced by women in STEM fields are a problem that is a "well-documented one with significant consequences to our country and our ability to innovate." It is stated by Maclean's that the federal government has failed to meet its promise of a "science-based value system to guide its agenda."

One example given is the lack of appointment of the chief scientific advisor. This person is important for "evidence-based policy decisions and science communication, offering impartial advice to the government as it passes legislation that affects our health and well-being," among other things.

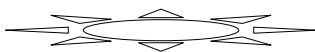
Canada Under-Performing in Innovation

"Nations need to have well-articulated strategies addressing science, innovation, competitiveness and productivity. Confusing or conflating these distinct but complementary goals is a recipe for under-performance," *The Huffington Post* stated.

Canada is under-performing in innovation. While the government has given funding for science excellence, this funding has not been general enough to spill over into the innovation sector for the country, primarily being focussed on graduate and post-graduate students. In the innovation ecosystem, Canada is reported to have a weak collaboration with colleges, polytechnics, and private enterprise that converts ideas into product and service innovations.

Canadian focus has been on input of ideas rather than on an innovation economy and the associated demand for ideas and solutions. Even with the new funds for innovation, there is renewed pressure on the Canadian federal government to support fundamental science.

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



Canadian Education News

Scott Jacobsen



Math Results Show Two Decades of Malpractice

The Edmonton Journal reported that, "Math education in Alberta has reached a new low. Our rate of math illiteracy has doubled for Grade 4 students since 2011, with our most vulnerable students hit hardest."

The trend is reported as a serious one. The international tests show low math scores. In the past, Albert ranked far higher than Ontario, for example, but has since sunk below. And is nowhere near the rankings of top performing countries such as Russia and Japan.

Those students most affected were the youth without math training in the home. Whether that be because the parents are unable to, or are unwilling or unable to pay for tutoring. Education Minister, David Eggen, said that this is a "bright red flag" for students in math with some socioeconomic groupings as more disadvantaged than

others. Many professors and math teachers blame the lowered results on a new style of teaching math, called "discovery math" which discourages memorization of basic math facts such as multiplication tables, and instead encourages students be guided as they attempt explore multiple strategies for simple math problems.

\$75 Million on the Table for School Proposals

"Alberta school districts have until Dec. 15 to submit proposals on how to spend their portion of the province's new \$75-million classroom improvement fund, Education Minister David Eggen said Tuesday," *The Edmonton Journal* reported.

The announcement was made with the president of the Alberta Teachers' Association, Mark Ramsankar, and the associate superintendent of Sturgeon Public School Division, Thomas Holmes. Eggen stated that the funding will improve the learning experiences of Alberta students, immediately upon implementation.

The \$75 million fund was announced in May when Alberta school boards voted to accept a 2-year deal with 46,000 teachers in Alberta and is not a recurring fund. . It will be for the 2017-18 school year. Edmonton Public Schools get \$10.6 million, the Edmonton Catholic Schools get \$4.6 million, and the Calgary Board of Education gets \$13 million.

Alberta political party leaders urge NDP to enforce LGBTQ policies

According to CBC News: Edmonton, the political party leaders of all stripes have been insisting that the NDP government of Alberta protect the LGBTQ rights of students. David Khan (Liberal, leader), Greg Clark (Alberta Party, leader), and Doug Schweizer (United Conservative Party, candidate) called for its enforcement.

The enforcement of the legislation and policy are meant to protect gender and sexual minority students. The appeals to government were prompted by a leaked report from CBC News. The report "suggests up to 22 per cent of school boards may not have policies in place."

Clark said, "It just shows how much work there is still to do. I think people think these issues are settled and they're clearly not."

"It's the law of the land. If they're not complying with the law, they're acting illegally," Khan said.

Ontario schools' sex ed seen as "progressive" and "forward-thinking" example for Alberta

The Daily Herald Tribune stated that JoAnn Cazakoff, vice chair of the Grande Prairie Public School (GPPS) board, noted the need for Alberta's sex education to alter to modern standards. GPPS District superintendent, Sandy McDonald, presented an outline for the Human Sexuality curriculum.

McDonald said this is to modernize it. When Cazakoff requested the information, she was impressed by Ontario's new sex education curriculum. She said that Alberta can follow Ontario's example, where she views Ontario as "progressive" and "forward-thinking."

The current Health and Life Skills curriculum emphasizes identification of external body parts and their function in the early grades, the human reproductive system at grade 5, and, in grade 7, the social influences of sexuality in addition to gender roles and equity.

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

Making Use of Lost Time

Deanna Roney



I would find podcasts waiting to be listened to, filled with useful information and enough humour to make them interesting, but I couldn't find the time to dedicate an hour (or so) to listening to them. But when I started looking, I found bits of time that were not being used productively. Bits of time that, if I were to take advantage of them, would make my life a whole lot more organized, and, in the end, grant me some down time that I could take without thinking about the dishes piling up in the sink, or the podcasts I should maybe listen to.

I have found a few useful bits of time that allow me to get these things done while remaining productive, and granting myself some free time when I don't have to think about work or what else I should be doing, instead. For one, podcasts are wonderful, I have found several pertaining to my areas of interest that are informative and give me insights into the world I am beginning work in. Without the hour or so a day each week to dedicate to listening, I have found that listening to these while doing other chores makes both the chore go faster and helps me learn. It generally takes me an hour to an hour-and-a-half to mow the lawn. Enough time to listen to a podcast and a bit. The only catch with this one is they must be quality podcasts with a solid sound that I am able to hear it over the mower. Some, no matter how loud I turn up the headphones, I can't hear a thing. I also turn these on when I am painting, either redoing a shelf, painting a room, or other such tasks that come with maintaining a home. And of course the usual housework. Take a bit of time and research a few podcasts that will inform you about the area you are trying to go, and cue them up to play continuously until you've finished.

The other bit of time I have found is that often throughout the day I need to take a break, say to make tea or a fresh cup of coffee. It is easy to just sit and wait for the water to boil, the tea to steep, and then continue on with work. But, if, while you're waiting, you instead take that ten minutes and switch the dishes, or wash up the few in the sink it will save time later, and make things more enjoyable when you're trying to make dinner and there is no counter space. On that note, making dinner is also a good time to listen to another podcast (you may need to find a few).

When you start looking for extra time it is easy to find, ten minutes here, five there. Use it to do a bit of those less enjoyable tasks and it makes the other time truly down time. By adding a bit of research to menial tasks they go by a bit quicker and still leave a productive feeling. It also means I will mow the lawn more often than otherwise—I enjoy listening to podcasts and this is the time I get to the most.

Working and learning from home means learning to balance many tasks that you don't have to if you are staying in a dorm. It means balancing taking care of the home, the yard, and the family; it means carving out time to finish all the daily chores you have with the school work that needs to be done. In finding these small bits of

otherwise unused time, it helps to maintain that balance, to feel productive when you're working on other tasks and it keeps you on track. I find in doing this I come back energized (maybe it's the coffee) and refocused. Whether it is because I don't have the image of a dirty kitchen haunting me, or the lawn that I can hear growing, or because the podcast I listened to reignited me, it doesn't really matter: what matters is that the task is done, my time is saved, and maybe by the time I turn in for the night all the tasks on my list will be neatly checked off.

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



The Fit Student

Fun Games out of Fitness

Marie Well



When you dream of exercise, do you imagine jumping jacks? Dull. Or do you dream of racing BMX bikes, playing underwater hockey, or dancing Bollywood? Ah, now you're thinking like an athlete. In other words, make fitness fun.

With the support of a super fit friend, after years of flab, I got toned. I carried to the gym Arnold Schwarzenegger's Complete Encyclopedia to Bodybuilding. I strained myself more lifting the book than I did lifting the weights. After a month, Arnold's book cover disappeared—as so did his first few hundred pages.

Thereafter, I'd often come to the gym with a puffy pizza belly. So, I asked the staff how to keep my pepperoni at bay. They whispered, "*Do fun cardio*"—not the life-sucking treadmill. So, I danced, cycled, and boxed. Soon, my belly gave way to a set of six pack abs.

I then saw repeated jokes in the school gossip column about a "gym mom." Surely, that wasn't me, *was it?*

During the same timeframe, as a TA, I ranted about the benefits of exercise: First, university gym memberships cost zilch. Second, exercise speeds up learning, lowers stress. Third, exercise makes you look and feel great. One student piped up, "I actually learned something today." Another student who dropped my class, also dropped the weight—in the gym.

Yet another student said she tried, but didn't like exercise. I got her to dabble with dancing, cycling—all the fun stuff. She didn't like any. She finally opted for musical theater—a workout for geeks.

So, do exercise you find fun. The greatest time of my life? Sparring martial arts in Banff while burping up Phil's pancakes. The second greatest? Getting kicked in the head by Brutus after overpowering him with punches.

In recent times, I restarted weight training after a multiyear lull. Now, food tastes tantalizing. Safeway meatloaf tastes like blackened rib-eye. McDonald's eggs taste like Safeway meatloaf. Best of all, the bumble bees that splat against your teeth as you cycle taste like Montreal Gumbo. You know, the kind Jean Chretien used to make.

And afternoon naps feel like fifteen-minute flicks. My dash across the street no longer looks like a post-op tap dance. Best of all, I stopped getting senior discounts at the drug store and cinema. In short, life is fun again.

Eric Barker in his book *Barking Up the Wrong Tree* gives advice to not just make the dull stuff fun, but to make it a game:

- People washed their hands more when a disinfectant dispenser gave off a fun noise each time it was pressed. Make dull tasks fun.
- Add challenges to make your tasks fun. We love challenges more than ease. Honestly.
- Make a game of your goal. Failing at the game can ignite fun, too. Honestly.
- As long as your challenge doesn't overwhelm you, you'll crave the game.
- Even small wins can keep you motivated: "Celebrating those 'small wins' is something that gritty survivors all have in common" (p. 92).
- Make a game out of whatever you want to become better at doing. Make a game out of creating better presentations, exceeding past exam performances, finishing work tasks, etcetera.
- To make dull (school)work a game, just change your mindset. Make small chunks of challenges that you aim to master. Reward yourself at each milestone.
- "When school classes and grading are structured like a game, student perform better ... studied harder, were more engaged, and even cheated less" (p. 85).

I saw more of my students in the gym than I ever did in my class. Did it make me feel bad? No. Nothing makes me feel bad now. I'm adrift in weights, Safeway meatloaf, and afternoon kips.



Athabasca University
Students' Union

AUSU Council Meeting June 8, 2017

Karl Low

The June 8, 2017 meeting of Council was a little different in that it was held in person in Athabasca, with most of the Council gathered there for convocation. Starting at 3:31 pm, some basic housekeeping business was handled with the agenda before moving on to the motions. The first two motions passed were repeats of the motions voted on by the students at the AGM. Since the Post-Secondary Learning Act says that the Student Union Council is the body with authority to pass motions for the Student Union, AUSU Council ratified the votes held at the AGM confirming that AUSU Council does approve them.

The next motion was to include the Single Parent Bursary in the 2017/2018 fiscal year as a temporary bursary, with one available at each awards deadline. It was noted that this bursary was originally a temporary bursary in the 2016/2017 fiscal year, but as it was not awarded, the Awards committee is looking to make some minor changes to the award, such as a reduction in the required credits, to see if applicants will come forward, and require that council approve the extension of the temporary term for another year to bring those changes to fruition. This was approved unanimously.

A second motion was then brought forward from the Awards committee to increase the number of Balanced Student Awards and Returning Student Awards from two to four in the next fiscal year. A considerable amount of discussion then ensued on if this would require changes to policy and the current budget. Kim Newsome

explained that the change would be for next year; the awards committee was recommending this change because those two award categories see the highest number of applicants while there remained \$9,200 within the total awards budget that was unallocated to any specific award. Shawna noted that this \$9,200 figure was inaccurate because some of those unallocated funds should have been allocated into the computer bursary fund when the policy was changed to award more computers, but that had not been properly done.

Executive Director Jodi Campbell noted that the motion would not change the current budget at all, as the increase would not take affect until the next awards cycle, which will be included in the next AUSU budget. However, policy changes would be required to reflect the different number of awards and to ensure that the next budget included the increased amounts.

Council became concerned about whether this motion was the proper way to go about this change, or whether what was needed was a policy change to the awards policy, which then would flow into the budget for next. This would require the creation of a number of action items for Council to follow up on to ensure that the changes were made, but this motion should not be passed until those policy changes were made. There was discussion about defeating the motion, but concerns were raised about the appearance of Council defeating a motion to increase a number of awards even if their intention was to increase those awards but through a policy change rather than a simple motion.

In the end, Council seemed to come to the consensus that the best course of action would be simply to have the motion withdrawn, which the mover and seconder agreed to.

The third motion to come from awards committee was to change the name of the Student Services Award to the Student Volunteer Award to better reflect the intent of the award. This passed unanimously with little discussion.

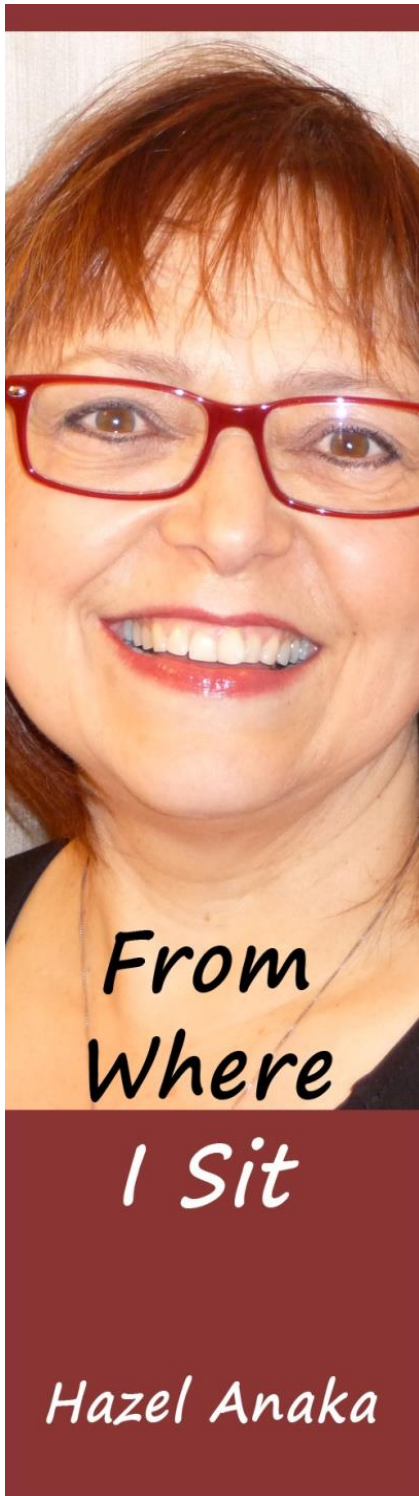
Finally, following some updates to the grammar of AUSU Council's position policy on deregulation of tuition, Council started into the reports.

From the reports it was noted that AUSU was given a position on the General Faculties Council adhoc governance committee, which is looking at exactly how the GFC governs itself and specifically to do with how individual faculties are able to change and adjust their programs.

Also, it was reconfirmed that student e-mail addresses for AU will finally be rolled out to students by the end of summer. From personal experience, I would not suggest having high hopes for this deadline to be met.

Finally, Council and Exec took VPFA Scott Jacobsen to task for his reports as they were lacking detail and presented in such a manner that made it appear as if he had not worked the hours required, although Shawna confirmed that she had previously aided Scott and was confident that those hours had been worked, just not properly reported. It was also noted that action items weren't being properly tracked by the new VPFA. It was suggested that this could be because of the recent transition, with Scott not fully understanding the requirements of the position and the current executive not being aware of that misunderstanding. In the end, Council was concerned enough about the VPFA reports that they chose to approve all but his, which they were going to correct and submit again during the next meeting, which will be held on July 11th at 5:30pm MST.

The meeting adjourned at 4:55pm.



Latest Insight

Cliché alert: No matter how discouraging or outright difficult our days may be, it can always be worse. You may have heard that nugget from your parents. You may have learned it through an elective at the School of Hard Knocks. Or maybe your life is all rainbows and unicorns, so far.

I've done some moaning about our still incomplete 2016 harvest and now impossible 2017 seeding and what that means to us. I've complained obliquely about being busy. But it's hard to go all out on that when so often it's self-inflicted! I've engaged in some wishful, wistful thinking. Why doesn't my tribe ever have a family reunion? Why don't we have a lake lot and motorhome and the fun that comes with those weekend escapes to the beach? Why haven't we had the cushions on our patio chairs since we bought them three or four years ago? Why are there only twenty-four hours in a day?

However, when any of us can pry ourselves away from the myopic focus on the good, the bad, the ugly of our minute-to-minute existence, we begin to see life differently.

We see the funeral of a sixty-five year old friend who died after a year-long fight with leukemia. A year of treatments that, ironically, "cured" the cancer but took him anyway because of complications from the stem cell transplant. A guy who was decent and honourable; a man committed to family and community; a husband, father, grandfather, brother, uncle, friend, colleague. A guy who'd worked hard and had the time and resources to travel the world and did.

Or the pancreatic cancer that is about to cut short the life of a fifty-four year-old. A woman who lost her sister to the same disease. A woman whose daughter chose to get married in her mother's hospital room so she could be present. A woman who's chosen to leave the hospital and die at home. A woman who I saw taking pictures of the décor at the Christmas party, who, at that time, hadn't yet received a cruel death sentence. A woman who was creative and hard-working and loved beautiful things and good ideas and didn't yet know that her life would be measured in weeks.

Unless we are living in total oblivion it is impossible to hear and think about stories like this and remain unaffected. To avoid doing the complex computations, permutations, transmutations, and any other -ations you can imagine that result in comparing their story, their reality to our own. To the conclusion that, oh my God, I'm so freaking lucky or hell, yes, my situation is worse. We're wondering what we can do to prevent such tragedy befalling us. How we can squeeze more life out of the life we have. How we've managed to dodge the really bad bullets so far. How long our luck can hold (hint: not indefinitely). How a more grateful focus on our blessings can make our days, if not perfect, then at least manageable. That, dear reader is the latest insight from where I sit.



Dear
Barb

Barbara Godin

Out of Step

Dear Barb:

My parents divorced quite a few years ago and my dad remarried. I have lived with both at various times and am close to each. My stepmother and I get along okay, for the most part. She hasn't really said too much until recently. My dad and I had an argument about something, which I don't want to get into on here, on the phone and I ended up hanging up on him. Three days later I got a text message from my stepmother telling me what a bad son I am and that I should apologize to my father. She also listed all the things her and my father have done for me, which were mostly material things and she suggested that I return everything to them that they have given me. This seemed to come totally out of the blue, she never said anything like this prior to this event. I haven't spoke to either of them since receiving the text. I don't even know if my father knows about it. I'm not sure what to do. I don't want to apologize because I don't think I did anything wrong, but I do want to have a relationship with my dad. I feel that my stepmother has made the situation worse by interfering. I would like to talk to my dad but now she has created this tension between us. I don't think this was any of her business and I don't think she should have sent me that text message. What do you think? I don't want to be estranged from my dad. Thanks, Ian.


Hi Ian:

Thanks for writing and so sorry about your situation. There are boundaries between step-parents and their stepchildren that should never be crossed, but your stepmother seems to have crossed that line. The relationship between you and your dad is just that, between you and your dad. Your stepmother should be a support for your dad and the two of them will most likely discuss these things, but, ultimately, it is up to you and your father to decide how to resolve things. I agree your stepmother probably added some tension to the situation by offering her opinion on what you should do. Also, I'm not sure why she would bring up all the things her and your father have done for you, unless that has something to do with the issue you and your father are having. She must have felt very strongly about this situation since this is the first time she has stated her opinion. You could respond to her text by simply acknowledging that you have received her message and just let it go at that. Don't get into an argument with her, as that will make things worse. Do not allow this message to interfere with your relationship with your father, just put it out of your mind and do what you think is right with your dad. You said you want to talk to your dad, so you should. There is a possibility that he is not aware of this message so I would not bring it up unless he does. Relationships have their ups and downs, but choosing not to talk to someone will only make things worse and can cause a riff that will be difficult to forget. Hope this information was helpful.


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.

Meanwhile, in a garden in Sacramento . . .




I'm learning to live again. No small thanks to you two.



What do you mean?

I mean . . . these days my soul comes first.



Aren't you even a little distracted by the thought of the looming elections?




Hahaha, mañana, Helmi . . .


What are we going to play?

perfect!

With joy, Dr. Reuben!



Since it's Canada Day, why don't we play Wijeratne's "Something There?"



A little more of this Bear River Riesling and we can begin.

2

The Doppelgänger Cure, Book II, Wanda Waterman

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

IMPORTANT DATES

- **Jun 30:** [Deadline to apply for course extension for Aug](#)
- **July 10:** [Deadline to register in a course starting Aug 1](#)
- **July 11:** [AUSU Council Meeting](#)
- **Jun 14:** [August degree requirements deadline](#)
- **Jul 31:** [Deadline to apply for course extension for Sept](#)
- **Aug 8:** [AUSU Council Meeting](#)
- **Aug 10:** [Deadline to register in a course starting Sept 1](#)

AUSU Council Retreat

In June 2017, AUSU council traveled from across Canada to meet up in Athabasca for a council working retreat. The retreat was held over the convocation weekend from June 7 to June 10, which provided a great opportunity for council to see the ceremony, greet other AU students and celebrate their successes, as well as to meet in person with various AU stakeholders. They even held an AUSU 25th-year birthday party on the main campus!

Overall, it was a fun and productive weekend. Council got a chance to get to know each other better, which helps facilitate conversation when most meetings throughout the year are done by teleconference. Some great ideas were formed to help AUSU with strategic planning for the upcoming year with a vision of expanding our advocacy efforts, member engagement, and more.

Find out more and check out all the great pictures on our website [here](#).



Eyewear Savings

AUSU has partnered with FYidoctors to bring some great eyewear savings to our membership. FYidoctors has over 300 locations across Canada and growing.

Discounts include:

- Select brand name frames starting at \$200
- Everyday value packages starting at \$159
- 20% off upgrades, lenses, and non-scrip sunglasses
- 10% off contacts

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



EYEWEAR SAVINGS FOR AUSU MEMBERS

GLASSES STARTING AT **\$159**
AND **20% OFF UPGRADES**

CASA Foundations Conference

Last month two of our AUSU executives travelled to Quebec for a conference with the Canadian Alliance of Students' Associations (CASA).

Find out more on the AUSU website [here](#)!



CLASSIFIEDS

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

THE VOICE

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