



# THE VOICE

Vol 25 Issue 48 2017-12-08

## Avoid the Holiday Blues

And Save Your Sanity

## Seasonal Shopping Shortcuts

Perfect Present Picking

## Expectation vs Reality

Getting Away from it All

Plus:

Dogs and Degrees

FWIS: *Sweet Precious Sleep*

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](mailto:voice@voicemagazine.org), and please indicate if we may publish your letter.**

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

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

## Editorial Holiday Plans

Karl Low



The Christmas season is upon us and the subscriber contest is now concluded. The winners have been notified, so check the e-mail address you entered with to see if you won and to send us your address so we can snail mail some goodies. The winner of the iPad mini is one Tammy S., and in addition to her there are some 25 people who won packages of the new *Voice Magazine* swag collections. It's so new that even I haven't seen them yet!

However, if you didn't win anything, don't despair, there's still a way you can get your hands on some nifty swag stuff, including, I'm told, some new gloves for cold hands, a USB key for storage of all those important essays and cat videos—we won't get into which one is the more important, and a bunch of other goodies. All you need to do is get in touch with me, either by mailing me direction at [voice@voicemagazine.org](mailto:voice@voicemagazine.org) or letting me know through our contact form, that you would be willing to be interviewed for the posterity and glamor that comes from being one of the Minds We Meet, our series of interviews with students just like you, so that other students, also like you, get a sense of the community that is Athabasca University.

With the Christmas season, however, comes Christmas stress. Have no fear though, *The Voice Magazine* has a few ideas on how you can combat that. Our feature article, "Avoid the Holiday Blues and Save Your Sanity" can help you with the general stressors of the season, and if that's not enough, we've got "Seasonal Shopping Shortcuts" for specific advice on how to buy for those people on your list, even the ones that seem impossible to buy for. We've also got some advice if you decide to just skip the Christmas stress entirely by taking a trip over the holidays, as one of our writers recently took a trip to Cuba with the thought that even while on holiday she'd be able to maintain a heavy course load. Find out what happened in the article "Expectations versus Reality."

However, if what you're really wondering is "What should I send that dashing editor of *The Voice Magazine* for Christmas?" I've got a great idea. Send me your suggestions for what you think should go in our Best of the Voice 2017 issue, that'll be available on January 5<sup>th</sup> (Yes, the new year is that close I can start talking about specific dates in it now.) I'll take your suggestions on board as I go through the articles myself, picking out which ones really stand out from our writers over the year, but I need your help, because I already know it's going to be tough to pick out the best.

Finally, if you want to get a great start on those holiday "feels", be sure to take a look at Deanna Roney's article this week, "Dogs and Degrees." It may not be a Christmas story, but it's heartwarming none-the-less.

I should point out that *The Voice Magazine* won't be published during the week of December 25 to December 29, while AU and AUSU is on break, but we will be having our standard issue coming out next week and on the week of December 22, keeping you informed right up to the holiday. Personally, I intend to be avoiding my computer that week, so if there's something urgent you need to let me know, best do it before then!

Right now though, you can still check out the scholarships, events, news, interviews, and everything else that lets you enjoy the read!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Karl". To the right of the signature is a small orange logo consisting of three horizontal bars of increasing length, resembling a stylized "E" or a signal icon.

## Avoid the Holiday Blues and Save Your Sanity

Carla Knipe



December brings a particular kind of panic to many people. Yes, there are the major holidays, which are meant to be a time of happiness and joy, but all too often those feelings are overshadowed by the menu planning, the juggling of schedules around school concerts and other events, and the hard decisions about who to spend the holidays with. But the biggest source of panic seems to be around the rituals of gift-giving. Retailers waste no time or expense to play on that fear and trepidation. This is nothing new. What is a recent phenomenon, however, is the whole shopping season that starts with Black Friday and ends with Boxing Day.

Now, more than ever, retailers seem to try even harder to make people part with their money in the name of holiday gifting. And let's face it; all of the pressure to find the best deal and to buy more stuff just adds to the stress and anxiety that the holidays bring. Everything to do with the holidays--the lights, the Christmas music and special markets—all feel like shopping and spending are emphasized rather than feelings of peace and goodwill.

Advertisers try to convince consumers that there are amazing deals to be had, that they won't find better deals at any other time of the year. This has led to people morphing into crazy shopping fiends who must pursue the deals at all costs. Just look at all the television news reports that show people camping out for days in front of department stores or others that show stampeding herds clamoring to get their hands on dirt-cheap flat screen TVs or designer handbags. The scrum looks like a combination of Lord of the Flies and The Running of the Bulls.

The Internet age has brought an alternative to physically going to malls to bargain-hunt. People can also shop online in the comfort of their home, even wearing their pajamas if they want to. It makes shopping feel all so easy and civilized—just add items to your virtual shopping cart, pop in your credit card details, and BAM! The goods get delivered to your doorstep. No fuss, no muss.

But all too often, the initial euphoria of pursuing all those deals leads to buyer's regret when the huge credit card statements arrive in the new year. And don't forget about the related fallout from too much shopping; there is the spring garage sale season where people unload all the stuff they've bought. Then there is the whole decluttering industry as well as the self-storage industry which exist to help people deal with all the stuff that they can't cope with.

Yet the whole holiday shopping season marches on. The US-based National Retail Federation predicts that 2017 holiday spending will be up from last year and younger shoppers will be the demographic who spend the most on gifts and participate the most in bargain hunting. The Black Friday phenomenon is a more recent arrival in Canada, but the feverish spending is still there. Finding hard data for 2017 is difficult because the numbers are still being crunched, but

Canadians are predicted to spend much more during the holidays than they normally would and break their budgets more this year than last year to get those holiday deals.

Many families are feeling the pinch in their finances for many reasons: job loss, personal debt, and high household bills, just to name a few. But it is possible to resist the spending pressure and still have a meaningful holiday. Here are a few tips to help.

First, a bit of planning can go a long way. Sit down, either on your own or as a family, and come up with some ways to celebrate coming the December holidays that don't involve hanging out at a mall. Just making some lists or openly discussing plans and goals for what you want the season to look like can be freeing. Think of activities that are free or don't cost very much. Spending quality time rather than money can be a wonderful focus.

In terms of gift giving, setting a budget is common sense, but, in reality, it is so easy to toss that aside when faced with the many situations that occur this time of year; sticking to a budget can be difficult when faced with coffees and lunches out with friends and relatives, office parties, or just being unable to resist the lure of the shopping mall. In terms of gift giving, while it would be wonderful to give a store-bought gift to everyone in your life, that is just not realistic. Instead, try to come up with other ways to appreciate them. It might be hosting a games night or potluck dinner, or sending them a handwritten letter or card to tell them how much they mean to you.

For those people in your life who you can't avoid giving a gift, coming up with a creative yet meaningful gift is often a huge challenge. But rather than trying to buy elaborate presents, give a small gift with great personal meaning for both you, the giver, as well as the recipient. A copy of a friend's favourite book signed by the author, a gift box made up of lots of small gifts that the recipient will enjoy, something that would help with their work or a hobby, or a handmade gift that comes with a hefty dose of "heart" will mean so much more than just buying any old thing at a department store.

One trend that is gaining traction is to gift experiences, not material goods. Purchasing a class, be it swimming or dance lessons, a continuing education class at a college or university, or an opportunity for the recipient to learn something that they haven't done before is a great gift idea. An alternative is to purchase a gift card for a day out somewhere, or even to buy a membership to a local attraction that the recipient or perhaps their whole family would enjoy. Gift cards for a favourite restaurant or tickets to a local sporting event or concert may also be eagerly received.

As well, giving a gift on behalf of the recipient to a charity is often overlooked. The buy-a-goat type programs for overseas development agencies have become more popular in recent years but are still not a popular choice compared to the usual gifts. Alternatively, a gift certificate to the micro-loan provider [kiva.org](http://kiva.org) will literally be a gift that keeps on giving because it can be used to provide loans over and over again. But also think locally, and support charities that do some tangible good in your area by either giving the gift of your time or supporting them through donations. Get together with work colleagues, friends or relatives to do some good for people in your area who are less fortunate.

These are just a few possibilities of how you can celebrate the season that will be more meaningful long after December fades away. It may take some time and effort to break the shopping habit, but with that and a bit of creativity, that effort may save your sanity—and your budget.

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



## Seasonal Shopping Shortcuts

Barbara Lehtiniemi



Have you looked at the calendar recently? You may have been so absorbed in your schoolwork—so disciplined and focussed—that you overlooked how quickly time is passing. It's time to raise your head from your textbooks and count the days until Christmas. If you need to get any seasonal shopping done, it's time to start thinking about it now.

Shopping can add to seasonal stress, especially for busy students. Here are a few strategies to avoid a gift-giving meltdown:

**simple but this is a crucial step.** A list is the first step of your shopping plan and will keep you focussed. Save your memory energy for exams! List everyone you need to buy a gift for and approximately how much you plan to spend on each. As you make purchases, enjoy the satisfaction of checking each person off your list.

**Divide and conquer.** Can you recruit anyone else to help? Even if you're the primary shopper of the household, delegating some of the work will save you time. Put your spouse in charge of getting one of the kids' gifts. Put the kids in charge of buying Grandma's. Removing one or two gifts from your to-buy list will make the whole shopping chore easier.

**Think "theme".** You can get most of your shopping done in one store if you select an imaginative gift theme. This could be the year that everyone gets funky socks that match their hobbies. Or go for themed purchases of hats, tote bags, books, kitchen gadgets, bedding, electronics gear, whatever. The options are endless. Select a theme, find a store, and conquer most of your shopping in one visit.

**Go local.** You can buy many of your gifts in one place while supporting local artisans. Find local makers of alpaca-wool socks, handmade soap, cheese, wine, chocolate, or beer. If you're short on ideas, visit a craft show where local artisans market their wares. If you buy many gifts from one vendor, you might be able to negotiate a discount.

**Gift cards are gifts too.** Even if you normally eschew gift cards, they could wrap up your shopping in minutes. Take your shopping list to the gift-card display at your local supermarket or drugstore. Select cards for coffee shops, restaurants, retailers, or service providers that best match your recipients' tastes. Load them up at the checkout, and your shopping is done. While a downside of gift cards is everyone will know how much you spent, one upside is wrapping will be a snap.

If you're buying gifts for family, friends, co-workers, clients, neighbours, teachers, babysitters and/or dog-groomers, the shopping stress can add up. Don't let 2017 be the Year of the Meltdown. Invest some time to develop your shopping strategy, and shop like you study: disciplined and focussed.

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



## Expectation versus Reality

Brittany Daigle



There are many pros and cons to being enrolled in six courses. I started at Athabasca University in November of 2016 and at the end of 2017 I will have completed 14 courses. That's about one course per month. The pros to doing this include finishing my degree sooner, never losing momentum, and never forgetting relevant material from previous courses. Despite those pros, the cons can take a toll on your physical and mental health. The cons include feeling burnt out, fatigue, losing motivation, and extreme procrastination, which are all things that I have personally dealt with.

Mid-way through August of this year I decided that, if I was going to continue to do this heavy course load, I would have to make some time for myself and my family. My boyfriend and I decided that we would take a week-long trip to Cuba in November for our anniversary! The booking process, the planning, and the anticipation was all very exciting, however, it was a major distraction from my school work.

From August through November I set realistic weekly assignment goals for myself, and, at first, I completed those goals. I set the goals to make sure I stayed on track with my school work and to try to eliminate any work that would have to be done while being in Cuba—after all, that week is supposed to be relaxing! But once November came around and the excitement started to set in, I began to slow down and hardly ever met my goals. This meant that I would have to either complete some school work on the plane and at the resort, or work extremely hard when we returned home. At this point I did not have much faith in myself to get a bunch of work done when we got back, so I decided to bring some school work with me to Cuba.

Fortunately, the bus ride from my home to the Toronto Pearson International Airport is over an hour and a half, the flight from Santa Clara, Cuba to Toronto is almost four hours, and the bus ride from the airport in Cuba to the resort is close to two hours! Some of you may think that would be exhausting (which it was!) but it allowed me a lot of time to work on written assignments on my laptop and get through some textbook readings. Before I left I told myself that I would try to save most of the textbook readings for when I am at the resort. Rather than doing an assignment, I could read in bed, by the pool, on the beach, and in the lobby while sipping on some Piña colada's, "It would be great!" I thought. Not so much.

During the bus ride to the airport I read some of my textbook and the moment I got onto the plane I pulled my laptop out and set it on the fold out table tray and began working on an assignment. Our flight was slightly delayed which helped because I got about a half hour of work done before take off. Unfortunately, the flight attendant told me that I had to put my laptop away during take off and once I did that there were so many distractions (seriously, stop serving me champagne and cookies!) that I did not even think to pull my laptop out again until after the first hour while in flight. After that initial hour I grabbed my laptop and did some more work. Distracted work, but nonetheless, work. With the flight attendants constantly turning on the

intercom to give you information or sell you things, coming down the centre aisle offering you drinks and snacks, and people standing up and walking around to talk to their friends on opposite sides of the plane, do not expect to have much chance to do work without any distractions.

When we arrived at the Santa Clara Airport and got onto the bus to head to the resort I realized that there would be nowhere to set a laptop down and do any work. Plus, the entire bus ride was narrated by a tour guide, so it would have been distracting regardless.

Finally, once we arrived at the resort, all expectations were thrown out the window. I did nothing school related all week. Absolutely nothing. I sat in a pool, drank copious amounts of alcohol, ate way too much food, made friends, and completely forgot about school. Honestly, it was exactly what I needed. Even if I had decided to pull out a textbook while at the resort I would have never retained any of its information. Thankfully, the five-hour plane ride home (with an annoying layover) was filled with tired people who were also just finishing their vacation, which gave me plenty of time to do all the readings that I would have done during the week.

Despite not completing everything I had hoped to complete, I had a great, relaxing week that was much needed. My biggest advice to any of you travelling during your school year is to try to get as much work as you possibly can before your vacation even begins, because reality and you will quickly realize that almost nothing will go according to plan. Now, it's time I get back to work!

*Brittany Daigle is 22 years old and completing her BSc in Computing Science & Information Systems with AU from Toronto, Ontario.*

## Scholarship of the Week

### Digging up scholarship treasure for AU students.

**Scholarship name:** CFI Scholarships

**Sponsored by:** Corporate Finance Institute

**Deadline:** December 31, 2017

**Potential payout:** \$500

**Eligibility restriction:** Applicants must be studying in Canada at the bachelor, master, or doctorate level, must demonstrate financial need or hardship, and have a passion for finance. Applicants must also have a LinkedIn profile.

**What's required:** An online application, along with 100 words describing why you need financial assistance to complete your studies, and 100 words describing your passion for a career in finance.

**Tips:** Check out the [previous winners](#) for inspiration.

**Where to get info:** [corporatefinanceinstitute.com/resources/support/scholarship/500-scholarship/](http://corporatefinanceinstitute.com/resources/support/scholarship/500-scholarship/)



## The Fit Student Stitch Those Wounds

Marie Well



Have you healed your emotional wounds? Dreamed nightmares about your emotional baggage, luggage lying open, spilling over with your private stuff?

Recently, I griped about how peanut butter bunged me. But a week before, I begged for peanut butter to get more fats in my diet. Fickle, I now abhorred the nutty spread. Minor issue? Maybe. But not for my boyfriend, Cuddles. He thrives on smiles and sweet words.

So, Cuddles coaxed, *Stop moaning and start mental training!* But what's mental training? It's like physical training, he said. Yes, *mental* fitness training! Well, I shadow box and weightlift—an hour a day. “Mental train at least that long,” he said. Stirred, I took the plunge, scouring top-notch clips on self-esteem, self-talk, and CBT.

But I shed tears whenever I mental train. *Will the pain wash away?* Yes! Just like it does with physical training. When I first lifted weights, I felt zapped. But after five months fitness, my energy blossomed—from seedling to

full flower, overnight. Spirited, I now bolt down streets with a spring long forgotten.

So, what blossoms with five-months *mental* training? The stitching of wounds.

We all have emotional wounds. Mine? Being bullied. But I viewed bullying as a hoax—a safe space, a sob story. That is, until I saw a book blurb on traits of the bullied. *My life!* Point after point pegged me. And, yes, wounds beg for stitches. But already, my mental training sewed scars, safety-pinned self-esteem, and snipped sore behaviors.

Glenn R. Schiraldi teaches freewriting and calm thinking in his book *The Resilience Workbook: Essential Skills to Recover from Stress, Trauma, and Adversity*:

- Don't let wounds fester: “Research has clearly shown that old emotional wounds don't necessarily heal with time. Left unresolved, they can exert an influence that affects present health and functioning” (Felitti as cited in Schiraldi, p. 81).
- How do you heal your emotional wounds? “Replace thoughts that promote distressing emotions with calmer, more upbeat thoughts” (p. 57).
- To heal, focus on the bright side: “Flaw fixation [is] zooming in on what is wrong ... Instead ... ask yourself ... ‘What isn't wrong?’” (p. 58).
- Yes, don't dismiss the bright side: “Dismissing the positive [is] negating the positives that might otherwise lift your mood and self-esteem” (p. 58).
- Plus, know that everyone, including yourself, has value: “Don't compare yourself with others. Allow that each person is different and contributes in unique ways according to unique strengths” (p. 59).
- Find the *source* of your wounds, and heal them: “Pick a ... troubling thought and ask yourself questions until you ultimately get to the question, ‘What does this say about me?’ This usually leads to the core belief. Then challenge the core belief...” (p. 67).

- To further heal yourself, journal: “Researchers have linked writing about past adversities to improved sleep, job satisfaction, memory, and grades and reductions in pain, fatigue, general distress, PTSD symptoms, arthritis, and asthma” (Pennebaker and Smyth as cited in Schiraldi, p. 82).
- But rewrite the story behind your emotional wound: “Could you give the story a new twist? For example, could the event signal a new beginning with a positive ending?” (p. 84).
- Journal your emotional wounds, but safeguard your secrets: “If you wish, you might burn or erase your writing or tear it into little pieces or throw them into the ocean or let the wind take them away” (p. 83).

If I recall the clip correctly, children who’ve faced abuse tend to have higher rates of disease and mortality, reducing life up to twenty years. Don’t be that stat. Instead, sob and stitch those wounds—with mental training.



## In Conversation ...with OVTLIER

**Wanda Waterman**



*“I’m paralyzed, living your lies  
I saw the devil in your eyes  
You put me down, you let me die  
Because you buried me, buried,  
Buried me alive”*

– from “Buried Me Alive” by Ovtlier, *What Doesn’t Kill You*

Ovtlier is a metal band based in Rochester, New York. Their debut EP *What Doesn’t Kill You* was released last year, and they’ve been featured in *Shockwave Magazine*, *Alt Press*, and *Metal Nexus*. Ovtlier has brought attention to the opioid crisis in the United

States by touching on the epidemic in their lyrics and in the videos for their singles “Buried Me Alive” and “Set the World in Flames,” which can now be seen on YouTube. Lead vocalist Joey Arena recently took the time to answer our questions about his music, the new album, and the addiction epidemic.

### What were your early years like?

I was an artistic, free-spirited, imaginative dreamer in Upstate New York. I did some moving around as a kid—from city to suburban schools—being raised by a single mother.

### What role did music play in your childhood?

My mom raised me on many of the classics, from Springsteen and Boston to Guns N’ Roses and Michael Jackson.

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

I picked up my first guitar at the age of nine, after being exposed to Nirvana. Like many, Kurt was my influence and my window to the music world.

**Your songs often center on the theme of addiction. Has addiction touched you personally?**

Personally, I haven't struggled with addiction, but many of my family members have. I've lost family to it, and some are currently struggling. I buried a couple friends this year and have seen the ripple effect of being in a band with addicts.

**What keeps it going?**

I think big pharma is profiting more than ever, with the constant numbing of society by pushing Percocet, antidepressants, and other gateway medications. Yes, I did use the term "gateway"—exactly what they are.

**In your opinion, what's the solution to the addiction crisis?**

Both doctors and patients being pre-screened and abiding to more strict of laws on what's written and prescribed. Granted, I believe they're all in bed together: big pharma, doctors, and some government officials. But, that's just my opinion.

**What was the most mesmerizing musical experience of your life?**

Personally, writing this EP. Driving over eight hours a week to Cleveland, Ohio, and back every weekend, rain or shine, snowstorms and weather advisories, no matter the situation, just to record *What Doesn't Kill You*. Sitting in a little studio, just the producer and I, writing and scrapping, fine tuning, and working our tails off to put out a product we can stand behind and be proud of.

**What's the story behind the song "Set the World in Flames?"**

"Set the World in Flames" is about overcoming your demons and self-doubt. Conquering your biggest fears and doing it all by yourself. Self-gratification for all you may sacrifice to live a better life.

**Is it hard for you to watch this video now?**

It still delivers the same chill when watching it. It's sad but it's the harsh reality.

**What do you like best about *What Doesn't Kill You*, so far?**

I feel that I delivered a true burst of raw emotion when writing it. I felt relieved and almost weightless, in a way. I took a lot of inner anger and frustration and put it into the music. I shed many layers of myself that needed to go.

**What other social issues do you hope to touch on in your music?**

Our next music video will dive into bullying, depression, and the things that go unnoticed in our schools and cyber networks. Also looking to touch base on being the product of a broken home, having an abusive (step) parent, and the reality that many, if not all, don't come from the "perfect" upbringing, and we can choose to rise above it or let our demons swallow us whole.

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**AU-thentic Event**  
**Upcoming AU Related Event**

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**AUSU Council Meeting**

Tues, December 12, 5:30 to 7:30 pm MST  
Online

Hosted by AUSU

[www.ausu.org/event/december-council-meeting-3/](http://www.ausu.org/event/december-council-meeting-3/)

No pre-registration required; e-mail  
admin@ausu.org for meeting package

**What conditions do you require in your life in order to go on creating?**

Air in my lungs, music in my soul, and spirituality in my life.

**What do you feed your muse? Are there any books, films, or albums that have deeply influenced your development as an artist?**

I'm a huge movie buff, but Ovtlier (outlier) so far, stems from personal life experiences.

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

Stay true. Follow your dream and vision, no matter if it lives by popular belief or is not easily accepted by some. Listen to your mind, body, and soul, and do right by yourself.

**What do you plan to do once the EP is released?**

A lot of touring. Currently in the studio and will continue to write and put out as much content as possible.

**Do you have anything else to add?**

Thank-you to anyone who took a chance on us. Thank-you to the individual reading this, and thank-you, *The Voice Magazine*, for the awesome questions and opportunity!

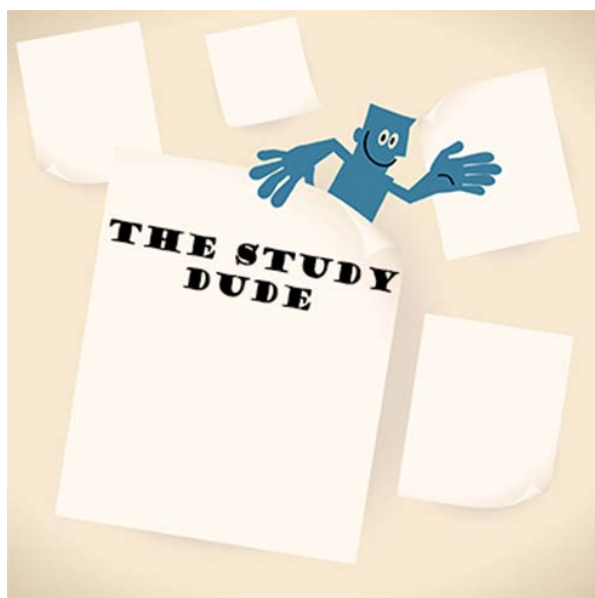
*Wanda also writes the blog [The Mindful Bard: The Care and Feeding of the Creative Self](#).*



## The Study Dude

### Pretty Presentations

**Marie Well**



If a professor punished lateness to class by making you sing opera, what would you do? Hide under the lectern while whispering Marilyn Monroe-style, your head paper-bagged? Or rent a karaoke machine, sport a belly dance dress, and don a Lady Gaga wig? Some of us would do the latter. Truly.

Proof of point: I love presenting. I stage danced in grade six, inexperienced, untrained, looking the fool. But my classmates gushed, saying I looked cool. That's what short hair, a home perm, and a lumber jacket gets you.

During my undergrad, I did a television interview on CFCN News, promoting a gala I held. I practiced several days from slides, memorizing my spiel. When I arrived for the interview, dressed in a pink suit, the reporter sized me slyly and began bickering with the

camera crew. She demanded bad lighting for me, flattering light for her. So, in the first minutes of the interview, a sickly light paled my skin, wrinkled my eyes, dulled my hair. But by the end scene, the crew washed me in a flattering pink light. My guess? The reporter later gnashed a molar.

In grad school, when I served as a TA, my supervisor banned my students from prettying presentations, no bells or whistles. I cowed to her whim, afraid of her feminist temper. Meekly,

I asked her if white screens with plain text would do. She nodded slowly, her glare smoldering my pupils. So, my students learned to make shoddy slides. When the semester ended, my supervisor posted presentations tips, a subtle apology to my misled first-years.

After my master's degree, I watched open courseware videos from MIT. One MIT professor tossed chocolates to keen students who answered questions. *I want to do that*, I thought. Later, when I *auditioned* for a teaching role, I brought a bag of mini chocolates, rewarding the interviewers with cocoa rushes. After my audition, they disclosed that an earlier candidate had the gift for gab—and a PhD. My likelihood of getting the job? Not a chance—not even with sacks of trick or treats.

Thomas R. Klassen and John A. Dwyer lay the rules for making straight-A presentations in their book *How to Succeed at University (and Get a Great Job!)*:

- Present on topics that pique your curiosity.
- Practice your presentation in the mirror, honing your gestures.
- Rehearse your presentation by videotaping yourself. The more you prepare, the better you present. But don't overprepare—you'll sound stilted.
- Let your presentation show-off your smarts and originality.
- Don't solely read off notes; instead, make eye contact with your audience.
- Bring candy or chocolates—or at least some surprise.
- Add a study guide to your presentation to help students ace exams.
- Spice your presentation with activities. People bore easily, so mix them up.
- Don't stuff too much information into your presentation. Focus on three key ideas, each with one to three supporting points.
- Dress sharp: a suit, a dress—even a tie.

When seeking presentation gimmicks, don't Google "classroom deal-breakers"—oops—I mean "icebreakers." Why? In presentations, joke shop rubber chickens just don't fly. But if late for class, do don a Bill Gates mask.



## Student Sizzle — AU's Hot Social Media Topics

### Following What's Hot around AU's Social Media Sites.

#### AthaU Facebook Group

Jennifer is curious whether she can access her etext before the course start date; so far the answer is a solid "maybe." Admin JoAnne posts a reminder of the group's unofficial status and includes links to official channels. Miranda wonders if unsuccessful scholarship applicants are notified; answers supplied are AUSU—yes, and AU—not so much.

Other posts include FNCE 300 calculator, CHEM 217 tips, and ENGL 458.

#### Twitter

@AthabascaU tweets: "Please, please remember that our Alberta December exam slots fill quickly ...so be sure to book yours soon! <http://ow.ly/3ui430gVxsZ> #yyyc #yeg."

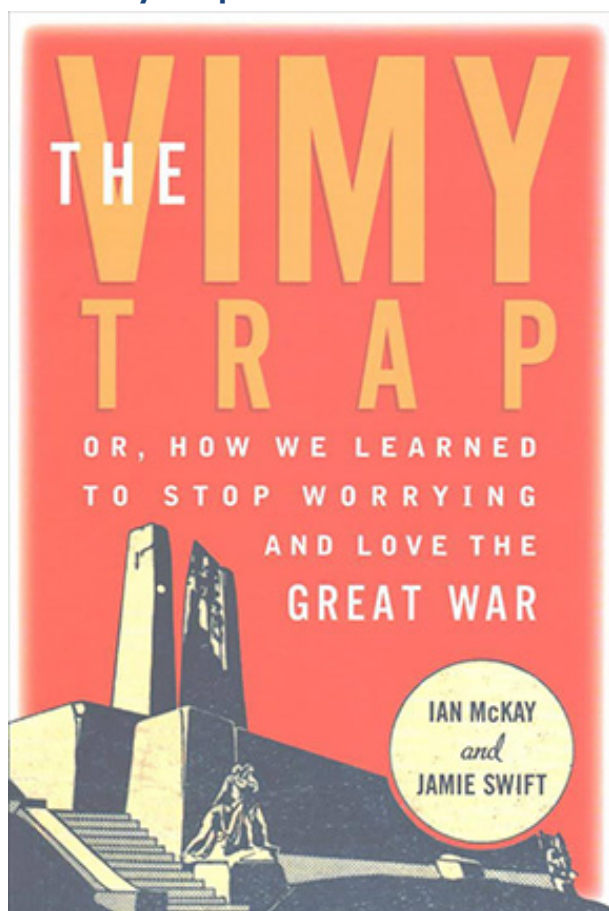
@AthabascaUSU (AUSU) tweets: "AU has confirmed that all AU student emails have been rolled out (this includes your FREE Office 365). If you don't have yours yet, check your spam folder for an email or contact AU!"



## Book Review

### The Vimy Trap

John Buhler



**Book:** The Vimy Trap or, How We Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Great War

**Author:** Ian McKay and Jamie Swift

The Battle of Vimy Ridge was part of the larger Battle of Arras in northern France during the First World War. Between April 9<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup>, 1917, four Canadian divisions wrested control of the ridge from the Germans, at a cost of 7,000 Canadians wounded and 3,598 killed. The capture of Vimy Ridge is often presented as a turning point for the young Canadian nation, establishing its military prowess and marking its independence from Britain.

In *The Vimy Trap or, How We Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Great War*, Canadian Historian Ian McKay and journalist Jamie Swift attempt to demythologize this Canadian legend. The authors trace the representation of Vimy Ridge in the Canadian psyche over the last one-hundred years, from a single battle in a futile war to the myth of a nation building moment.

As the title indicates, the authors see the symbolism that we now associate with the Battle of Vimy Ridge to be a trap. They view the mythology of Vimy (a

perspective they call “Vimyism”) as dangerous, presenting a romanticised vision of combat that denies the realities of modern warfare.

Of course, the book’s subtitle alludes to Stanley Kubrick’s 1964 classic satirical film, *Dr. Strangelove or: How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Bomb*. The movie’s plot ridicules the Cold War and the policy of mutually assured destruction. In it, after an unbalanced general in the United States Airforce orders the bombing of the Soviet Union, the US futilely attempts to call off the mission. In response, the Soviets set off a weapon that will destroy all life on earth. McKay and Swift seem to be warning us that an unchecked militaristic perspective leads to disastrous consequences.

Throughout *The Vimy Trap*, McKay and Swift separate the First World War (the Great War as it was originally known) and the Battle of Vimy Ridge from the significance later imposed upon these events, and help the reader understand what the war meant to earlier generations of Canadians. They examine contemporary reports, books written by the combatants, newspaper and magazine articles, as well as artistic works, and museums and monuments, to show us that few people during the war or immediately after saw Vimy as the symbol that it has since become.

McKay and Swift also challenge our modern notions about the Great War. Though often justified as a war against tyranny, that was never true. Our allies, the “Entente” included Czarist Russia, a country hardly interested in democratizing the world. (One could say the same about Great Britain and France, each with a vast empire built upon the invasion, domination and exploitation

of foreign nations). It was clearly, as the authors quote historian J.L. Granatstein, “a battle of rival imperialisms” (p. 33).

Nevertheless, the book’s focus is on Canadian participation in the war and the many assumptions we now take for granted. It was not, as we are now told, a war that united Canadians. In fact, at the war’s outbreak most of the Canadians who enlisted were British born. While at least initially these English-Canadians eagerly enlisted (and were convinced they would participate in a quick and easy victory), French-Canadians had little enthusiasm for war. Amid protests against conscription four Quebecers were shot to death. And rather than reminiscing about valour or glory, Canadians who fought in the Great War remembered its horrific carnage. In its aftermath, instead of a nation revelling in gallantry and heroics, the authors portray an atmosphere of overwhelming revulsion at the destruction created by modern warfare.

Likewise, the book also confronts many of the accepted beliefs about Vimy Ridge, placing little strategic significance on the hard-fought victory. The Germans certainly did not see it as a defeat, nor did it lead to the anticipated allied breakthrough that would have ended the trench stalemate in that region. Furthermore, few Canadians at that time, according to McKay and Swift, believed that Vimy Ridge represented a nation building episode. The authors assert that for the most part, this understanding would only be imposed upon the battle many decades later, in the 1980’s and 1990’s, with the mythology eventually making its way into popular books and educational materials.

For many readers, this book will challenge their perceptions of the battle at Vimy Ridge and the First World War, but it is meticulously researched, including extensive notes and further reading sections. Short listed for the Writers’ Trust of Canada Shaughnessy Cohen Prize for Political Writing, *The Vimy Trap* would make an fascinating read for anyone interested in popular politics, cultural studies, Canadian history or the history of the First World War.

*John has his BGS from AU and started writing for The Voice while he was taking it in 2003.*



### **Unearthing classic articles from previous issues of *The Voice Magazine*.**

This week, settle into some armchair travelling by following AU students adjusting to life overseas.

**Beer drinkers on the buses, dogs in the malls.** In a nine-piece series, Edmontonian John Buhler observes some perplexing aspects of German culture as he settles into a 6-month stay. "We have encountered so many spiders here that I'm starting to wonder if they are Germany's national animal." *Life in Germany: Part 2*, October 28, 2005.

**From the Bay of Fundy to brown-sugar beaches.** In an ongoing series, Nova Scotian Wanda Waterman recounts her extended travels in the North African country of Tunisia. "I resign myself to spending every morning here trying to finish my work on a Latin-Arabic (non-QWERTY) keyboard." *Maghreb Voices - Tunisian Days 1*, October 18, 2013.

## Women of Interest

### Virginia Woolf

Barb Godin



Virginia Woolf was born on January 25, 1882, in London, England, and died March 28, 1941, in Lewes, Sussex, England. Virginia was an English novelist, critic, and essayist. Her father, Sir Leslie Stephen, was a scholar who spent time as editor of the Cornhill Magazine as well as the Dictionary of National Biography. When Virginia was twelve years old, her mother died. Virginia and her older sister were home schooled in her father's library. As a result, she met many famous writers and scholars with whom her father had been acquainted, thus sparking Virginia's interest in literature.

In 1912, eight years after the death of her father, Virginia married Leonard Woolf, who was a bright young writer from Cambridge England. They first met while Virginia was visiting her brother, a student at Trinity College. Leonard described Virginia as "the most Victorian of Victorian young ladies." While on their honeymoon, Leonard discovered that Virginia had experienced sexual abuse as a child and had a strong aversion to sex. In spite of this, the couple wanted to have children, but were advised not to because of Virginia's mental health issues. During the marriage Virginia became

involved in a lesbian relationship, which Leonard was aware of and did not object to.

The Woolfe's shared many common interests and together founded the Hogarth Press. Their first printed volume was "Two Stories by L. and W. Woolf." This was one of many successful books published by the Hogarth Press, whose guiding principle was to publish young and unknown writers. From a young age, Virginia had been writing essays for the Times Literary Supplement. Eventually her critical essays were published in a two-volume collection titled "The Common Reader" in 1925 and in 1933. Throughout the years English Literature students have studied these criticisms to try to understand Virginia's work as a novelist.

During her life Virginia Woolf struggled with bipolar disorder. It is said that several of her characters were developed as a result of her mental illness, especially Mrs. Dalloway (1925). In the course of her lifetime Virginia Woolf published approximately fifteen books, the last, "A Writer's Diary", was published in 1953, following her death. Virginia received critical acclaim for much of her work, including "The Voyage Out" in 1915. "Night and Day" in 1919 and "The Waves" in 1931.

Virginia Woolf's death by drowning in Sussex, England, in 1941 was often thought to be a suicide. At the time of her death Virginia had left a note for Leonard stating: "I don't think two people could have been happier than we have been." Virginia was greatly impacted by the burdens of life during World War II. Over time she grew fearful that her mental disorder would become a permanent condition she would not be able to overcome.

Additional information about this interesting woman can be found at the following websites:

<http://www.who2.com/bio/virginia-woolf/>  
<https://www.biography.com/people/virginia-woolf-9536773>  
<http://www.notablebiographies.com/We-Z/Woolf-Virginia.html>  
[http://www.virginiawoolfsociety.co.uk/vw\\_res.biography.htm](http://www.virginiawoolfsociety.co.uk/vw_res.biography.htm)

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



## Dogs and Degrees

Deanna Roney



I got my dogs when they were just puppies, almost nine years ago. It is hard to believe that much time has passed. I watched them slow with age, and today had to take one in for a minor surgery as he has developed some lumps on his legs. We are waiting, anxiously, for the results. Their age first started to show in their speed, and one developed a pretty grey muzzle. They still get excited at riding in the car, though, and wiggle whenever we get back home.

These are the same dogs, less one we lost a couple years ago, that stayed by my side, literally, while I worked toward my degree.

They lay either under the table, by the desk, or in the doorway (before I moved into the bigger office). They are so content to hang out with me while I work that if I happen to go into my office and close the door without them I will hear them sniffing, loudly, at the door. They might huff if the sniffing wasn't enough to get the door open or poke their nose or paw under the door (yes there is just enough room), but they never bark. They just wanted to be beside me, sometimes for only a minute, and then they wanted back out to be beside my husband.

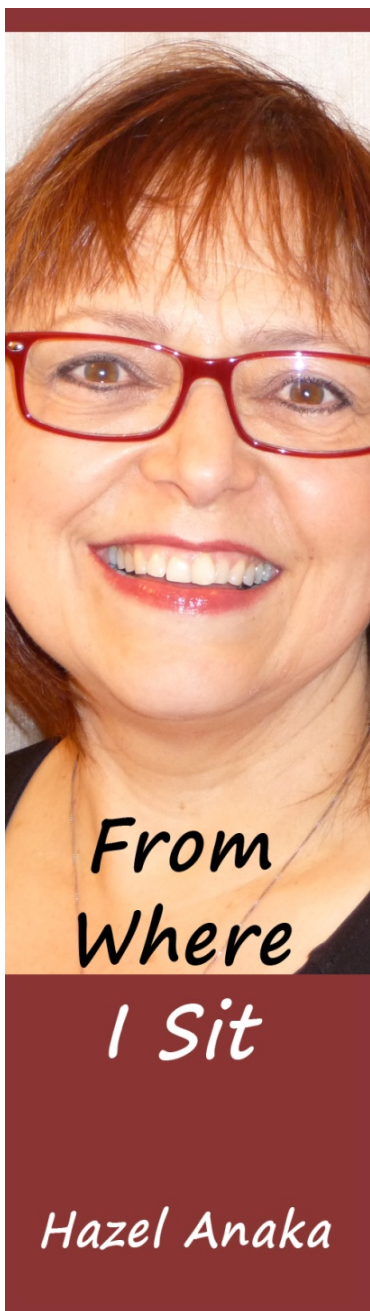
They always know when I am deep in concentration as they snooze contently on their beds, and when I need a break or if I am getting frustrated I always find a nose poking under my arm. They have, in their own way, cheered me on through this whole process, at least, in my eyes. Dogs are amazing teachers, they are patient most of the time, but if they are feeling left out they let it be known, if they need some love they push until they get it, but they never demand too much. A nose will force its way under my elbow until I turn and give him a scratch or a pet and then he moves back, content, to his bed by my feet.

There is something beautiful about how they take just what they need, and in how they stand up and demand it before it gets forgotten. I have drawn comfort from them when papers haven't gone my way, or I just couldn't grasp a concept; they help me to recharge, or, if needed, hide from the world in their fur.

They have taught me to be patient, to voice my opinion when it needs to be heard, but they have also taught me to be present. To take in the day as it comes and enjoy the moments between starting and ending. Some of the best days, looking back on my degree, are the days when I had my feet tucked under one of my boys and they snored quietly under my desk, for hours.

On days like today, I feel drained. One dog is confused about what is going on, the other is quite strung out on painkillers that I'm not sure he knows which way is up. He doesn't understand why he feels the way he does and doesn't want to sleep. But also falls asleep while sitting up, leaving us rushing to catch him. On days like today, I worry about what is to come and I find it hard to focus on everything I should be. But I remember all the hours they put in with me, so now that they are both finally settled and the one is asleep (laying down) I can focus on the work, while they lay by my feet. Just as it should be.





## Sweet Precious Sleep

Have you ever suffered sleep disturbance because of a mind heavy with thought? The thoughts may be disturbing if the underlying issue is serious. If someone is worried about a dire diagnosis, job security, money trouble, cracks in a relationship, or the perennial favourite—the meaning of life—the angst is real. The thoughts that consume us through the day don't magically take the night off. They hop aboard a never-ending train running in a closed loop. They rob us of the gift of a restful sleep that is critical to our health and well-being. And somehow, those staring-at-the-ceiling-in-the-middle-of-the-night thoughts are darker and scarier and more debilitating than they could ever be during the glare of day. All the distractions and noise disappear leaving the Big Thing front and centre in the void.

Sometimes the thoughts are anticipatory in nature. How will I handle XYZ? Will the new job work out? Is this guy right for me? How will I get through tomorrow's mind-numbing, go-nowhere meeting with the office nincompoops? Other times they are a replaying of the coulda, woulda, shoulda's of the day. Or one's entire life. Why did I marry her? I should have told the boss to shove it. Why didn't I explain my bright idea better so they all got it? Why didn't I study medicine in 1980, I'd be rich and retired by now?

The problem with both these approaches is that they are embedded in either the past or the future. And we (should) know we have no control over either realm. Yet, it's a trap we've all stumbled into.

As counter-intuitive as it seems, good and exciting news is equally disturbing to our sleep. Which bride hasn't lain awake planning every tiny nuptial detail? Which new lottery millionaire hasn't pondered the world of options newly open to them? Which set of parents or grandparents hasn't imagined the blessed new arrival? Which new hire hasn't played the climbing the corporate ladder dream sequence?

Right now I'm losing sleep over two things. They are each a combination of good news with a touch of risk/challenge. About a month ago I was approached to give an hour-long presentation at a tourism conference in February. It's a wonderful opportunity to tell our story and promote the festival I coordinate. I've got insights to share and advice to offer. Inherent in this great opportunity is also the chance to freeze, screw up, make a fool of myself. See the dilemma? So when I should be sleeping I'm rehearsing my opening or pondering different approaches to the subject matter.

The other big thing is the very real possibility we will undertake a major addition to our small bungalow. And while we've met with a draftsman, general contractor and a lender for the nuts and bolts issues, I keep thinking about my office layout, colour swatches, furniture placement, the dream of a walk-in closet and an ensuite. I just need to find a way to confine my two big things to my waking hours when I can actually create a PowerPoint or compare colour swatches, rehearse my delivery, or do a scale drawing. Here's to sweet precious sleep, from where I sit.

Hazel Anaka's first novel is *Lucky Dog*. Visit her [website](#) for more information or follow her on Twitter @anakawrites.





## The Hardest Decision

*Dear Barb:*

*Hi, I recently put my dog down and now I'm wondering if I did the right thing. Tasha was a ten-year-old miniature schnauzer with lots of health issues. For the last two years she was on several expensive medications and they really weren't making a difference in the quality of her life. When I asked my vet whether it was time, he said he didn't want to influence my decision; however I finally got him to tell me what he would do if Tasha was his dog. He said he would probably put her down, adding that it was completely my decision. One cold snowy morning last week I took her out for her morning walk and she just stood there shaking, even though she had a sweater on. I began to doubt whether she would be able to make it through the winter, so I took her in. At the time it felt like the right decision, but a week later, I'm having second thoughts. How do I resolve those conflicted feelings within myself? Thanks Pat.*

Hi Pat:

The decision to put a pet down is very difficult and many people agonize over when is the right time. We love our pets like members of our family. We don't want to see them suffer, but we also don't want to lose them. Remember that when you decided to put her down you believed it was the right thing to do. It's only after the fact that you are having second thoughts as the good memories are

replacing the painful days at the end of Tasha's life. It has only been a short time since putting her down, and, although you will always grieve, you will eventually learn to live with the loss. Fortunately, there are things you can do to help make the transition to life without your dear pet. Create a memory box with your pet's collar, favorite toy, and sweater. Take the time to create a scrapbook with all your special memories. Talk to other family members and share stories about Tasha. Check online for support groups in your area or counselors that deal specifically with pet loss. Make a donation to your local shelter in your pet's name. Give yourself time to grieve, everyone grieves differently. Check out the following story, it may help with your doubts Pat.

*Dear Barb:*

*I just put my twenty-year-old cat down and I wanted to share my story. I often read about people who have difficulty making the decision to put a pet down. I was that person and I kept Mitzie with me much longer than I should have. When I look back I know she was suffering, but I just did not want to face the pain of losing her. In the end I wasn't thinking of Mitzie, but was thinking of myself. If I had to do it over I would have put her down long before I did. I just wanted to share my story and hopefully help someone else who is having doubts and second thoughts about their decision to euthanize a pet. Thanks Terry.*

Hi Terry:

Your letter couldn't have come at a better time. Thank you for sharing. I'm sure Pat appreciates your story.

Follow Barb on twitter @BarbGod

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





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STUDENTS' UNION

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## IMPORTANT DATES

- Dec 12: [AUSU Council Meeting](#)
- Dec 15: [January degree requirements deadline](#)
- Dec 22: [Deadline to apply for course extension for Feb](#)
- Dec 23-Jan 2: AU & AUSU holiday closure, inclusive
- Jan 10: [Deadline to register in a course starting Feb 1](#)
- Jan 15: [February degree requirements deadline](#)
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## Get Involved!

Studies show that the people most likely to succeed are those who give the most to others. Student LifeLine can help you get involved! From joining a committee or student group at school, to being a mentor, to volunteering in your community, there are countless ways to get engaged and give of your time.

Contact **Student LifeLine** any time, 24/7 at **1-800-567-2255 (TTY:1-877-371-9978)** to speak to a caring, professional consultant for free expert advice or help finding a volunteer opportunity that is right for you!.

You can also log in to <https://login.lifeworks.com/> (username: **AUSU**, password: **wellness**) to access a wealth of helpful articles and resources, such as:

- Homepage feature called "Get Involved"
- Podcast on how to get involved after a natural disaster
- "Giving Back" Infographic
- Article on "Making the World a Better Place"

**This is a FREE service for all AUSU members!**

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



## AUSU Advocacy

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

**If you are experiencing issues at AU that you would like assistance with, please feel free to contact us at [admin@ausu.org](mailto:admin@ausu.org) and we will do our best to assist you!**

In addition, AUSU council and executives sit on **over 30 different AU committees** to ensure the student voice is heard, including:

- Board of Governors
- General Faculties Council
- Faculty Council for each Faculty
- Student Experience Team
- Student Academic Appeals Committee
- Academic Excellence Awards Committee
- .. and many more!

AUSU executives also regularly meet with various AU VP's, including the President, Faculty Deans, and various other department heads.

**Want to know more? Check out AUSU's advocacy efforts on our website [here!](#)**



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# CLASSIFIEDS

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

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## THE VOICE

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