



THE VOICE

Vol 26 Issue 06 2018-02-09

Meeting the Minds

Interviewing Students Like You!

AU'S New Writer in Residence

Introducing Richard Van Camp

Pulling Heartstrings on a Shoestring

Valentine's for the Thrifty

Plus:

In Conversation: Via Intercom
The Poetic Side of Valentine's
and much more!



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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR



We love to hear from you!
Send your questions and comments to 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

Two is More Fun

Karl Low



Valentine's day is just around the corner, and you'll see that reflected throughout this issue of the Voice, as we've got ideas for that last minute gift—even if your wallet is looking a little bare—that go beyond the traditional flowers and chocolates. And if you want to keep up with that love life you'll need the stamina for it, and we've got you covered there as well, with not only a bouquet option that might improve your health but tips on how to keep that stamina up, perhaps even to the point of what happens when you go a little too far with it.

But of course, Valentine's day is about more than just the physical, there's also the mental aspect, so if you want to read about passion, then you'll want to check out our feature articles. That's right, there's two of them this week.

The first is an interview with a student who also runs a ranch and holistic healing enterprise. What motivates a person to seek out further education? Find out in our Minds We Meet.

Our second feature this week, is an interview with AU's new writer in residence, Richard Van Camp. This multi-faceted writer also strides two worlds, his nation of the Dogrib Tribe in the North West Territories as well as the more familiar western world, having been published in multiple mediums including novels, children's stories, and even comics. As AU's writer in residence, he encourages students to connect with him so that he can hear and help you share your own stories.

We also look at the most romantic of writing, poems. While there's no poetry in this issue, we do go a bit meta with it, as Deanna Roney explores her relationship with it, including giving us some ideas of places we can start if we wanted to add a bit of poetry to our own lives. In our modern world with the omnipresence of television, social media, and instant connections to nearly everything, the idea of taking the time that poetry often demands seems out of step. But maybe that makes it more important now than ever.

But if you're one of those people who feel that Valentine's Day is more an excuse for greeting card and candy companies to push their wares, have no fear, we still have a number of other articles in this issue to keep you amused.

In particular, our interview with Via Intercom is worth a read. It prompted me to seek out their music through the link and give it a listen. If you want something that sounds both somehow familiar and yet completely new, you might want to do the same

We also take a look at CMIS 245, a course that designed to help you get the most out of Microsoft's Office software. I took this course a long time ago under a different name, and, I'll have to admit, while it seemed a bit out of place for a university course at the time, it did provide a few extra tricks which came in very handy throughout the rest of my courses at AU. These days it's even more relevant given the subscription to Office 365 that comes with being an AU student. If you haven't taken this course already, I strongly suggest you read the article and consider it. Not only might it boost your GPA, but I'm quite sure you'll find it useful for future work.

We top all that with our news, events, scholarships and other regular listings, so enjoy the read!

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

MINDS WE MEET



Paddy Storey, originally born and raised in Alberta, now lives with her husband, her teenage daughter, 19 horses, one miniature pony, two donkeys, five dogs, four puppies, and two cats on a cattle ranch North of Quesnel, surrounded by the trees of beautiful British Columbia. She also has a son that recently graduated and has since moved out on his own. She balances operating Rydyn High Ranch with her husband and Hearts and Hooves Holistic Healing while currently working on her BA with a major in Psychology and a minor in Women and Gender Studies through AU.

What has been your favorite AU course that you would recommend to other students to take?

WGST 333 (Goddess Mythology, Women's Spirituality and Ecofeminism) – I absolutely loved that course. So much

historical information that really makes you think about how colonialism and Christianity have shaped the world. As a nature lover and someone who runs an energetic healing business, the ecofeminism part of it was really relevant to me as well.

What are your academic goals for 2018?

To continue working on my undergrad. My goal is to finish two full semesters between April 1 and December 31.

What do you hope to do with your education from AU?

I want to add a therapeutic aspect to my existing business, so I plan to go on to get my Masters in Counselling

What inspired you to work with horses?

I grew up on a cattle ranch and we always had horses. At 10, I joined a horse 4-H club and was a member for 11 years until I aged out. My horse was my best friend growing up and I wanted to offer that connection to as many people as possible.

Tell me about your favourite horse?

My favourite horse is the mare that I got when I was about 8 and she was my 4-H horse. I was so excited to have a registered quarter horse. Her name was Poco Bar Candy – I called her Candy. She was a brat of a horse, not an easy one to ride, but she was my best friend. I spent hours and

hours on horseback throughout my youth and teen years. She died a few years ago at 22 years old and it broke my heart.

What is Rydyn High Ranch?

Rydyn High Ranch is our cattle/horse ranch operation. We have just under one hundred head of commercial cows and plan to grow to 350 head within the next four years so that my husband can quit his day job and ranch full time.

What does Hearts and Hooves Holistic Healing do?

Hearts and Hooves is my side of the business. I offer energy healing, aromatherapy, equine facilitated learning and personal development and we are adding on a guest ranch/retreat to it as well so that we can offer multi-day programs.

Besides working with horses, what are some of your other passions?

I love writing – poetry and stories and I am working on a book. Photography is another passion of mine. Enabling and empowering young women and women is something that feeds my soul.

What are you currently reading for fun?

Braving the Wilderness by Brene Brown and Witch, *Unleashed, Untamed, Unapologetic* by Lisa Lister

What is the number one show you think everyone should binge watch?

Riverdale... It's my new favourite! Everyone should be watching it. The characters are quite different from the comics, but I can't get enough of it.

If you were to host a dinner party and could invite anyone, famous or not, past or present, who would be sitting at your table? What would the conversation be about?

Mahatma Ghandi, Dalai Lama, Maya Angelou and Oprah Winfrey – we would talk about how to reverse some of the less than desirable changes in society that have taken place over the last decade or so and how to help people find peace within themselves and not live in fear and hatred.

AU-thentic Events **Upcoming AU Related Events**

AU Library Orientation Webinar

Mon, February 12, 12:00 to 1:00 pm MST
Online
Hosted by AU Library
library.athabascau.ca/orientations.html
No pre-registration required

Doctorate in Business Administration (DBA) Info Session

Mon, February 12, 5:00 to 6:00 pm MST
Online
Hosted by AU Faculty of Business
business.athabascau.ca/event-details/doctorate-business-administration-dba-information/
Register online at above link

Online MBA Info Session

Tues, February 13, 10:00 to 11:00 am MST
Online
Hosted by AU Faculty of Business
business.athabascau.ca/event-details/online-mba-executives-information-session-3/
Register online at above link

AUSU Council Meeting

Tues, February 13, 5:30 to 7:30 pm MST
Online
Hosted by AUSU
www.ausu.org/event/february-council-meeting-2/
No pre-registration required; e-mail admin@ausu.org for meeting package

Writing a Proposal for a Thesis

Fri, February 16, 12:00 to 1:00 pm MST
Online
Hosted by AU Faculty of Graduate Studies
fgs.athabascau.ca/news/presentations/
e-mail fgs@athabascau.ca with your student number to register

Richard Van Camp's Inaugural Writer in Residence Talk

Fri, February 16, 3:00 to 4:00 pm MST
AU Edmonton, meeting room 1222
In-person and online
Hosted by AU
writer-in-residence.athabascau.ca/news/index.php
No pre-registration required

How do you balance school and work?

Lucky for me with our relocation and revamping of my business plan, I have had a lot of downtime in the past few months, so I have been able to dedicate time to my schoolwork fairly easily. Come springtime when I am marketing, doing trade shows and building up my retreat side of things, it will likely become a lot more difficult to balance.

Where do you see yourself 5 years from now?

I hope to be running a successful equine facilitated wellness retreat and ranch as well as doing some motivational speaking and promoting my book (maybe books).

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.



Introducing AU's New Writer In Residence Richard Van Camp

Carla Knipe



Each year, Athabasca University invites a Canadian writer to be its Writer in Residence, an invited artist who serves as a resource for students, faculty, and the university and writing communities. This year, AU has chosen Richard Van Camp. He is a proud member of the Dogrib (Tlicho) Nation from Fort Smith, NWT. He is a graduate of the En'owkin International School of Writing, the University of Victoria's Creative Writing BFA Program, and the Master's Degree in Creative Writing at the University of British Columbia. He has written screenplays, novels, graphic novels, and even books for babies.

Richard Van Camp's inaugural writer-in-residence event will take place on Friday, February 16 at 3pm at AU Edmonton, in meeting room 1222. He will deliver an hour-long lecture, including an audience Q & A and an opportunity

to visit with him after the discussion. Anyone who loves writing and the creative process is welcome to come. If you can't be there in person, you can also [attend AU's writer-in-residence talk online](#).

In the meantime, *The Voice Magazine* thought you should get to know Richard a little better. Voice writer Carla Knipe asked him some questions by email.

Let's start with a question that hopefully you aren't tired of answering! What made you decide that writing was the career for you?

I've always been a reader growing up (Stephen King, *The Warlord*, *Savage Tales of Conan*, *EPIC Magazine*, etc.) and I just realized that no one was telling my story of growing up in Fort Smith,

NWT, in the 70's and 80's so I decided that I was going to tell a story that I would like to read, and that's been my approach for twenty-one books so far.

How did growing up in a small town in northern Canada shape you, especially with regard to your writing?

The slang, the romance, the gossip, the espionage, the laughter, the slyness, the pride!

You have said that you see yourself as a storyteller. Do you enjoy telling stories orally as well as putting them down on paper?

Both have their own rewards when you rock out properly and with everything you've got!

Your catchphrase, if you will, is that you've "published 20 books in 20 years with 11 different publishers." Once you got that first book published, was it easier getting others published? How did getting published change how you feel about creativity and writing?

It is the most rewarding anything when you line up your book with the right publisher and editor. After that, it's a thrill to get to work when you know you have a deadline and a word count and you focus and do your best.

At what moment in your career did you feel that you'd finally "made it" as a writer?

I'll always be a student of the craft of writing, so there is no graduating: just earning every word is enough for the stories that keep choosing me.

Do you have a particular writing routine that you like to follow? Is there a "typical" day in the life of Richard Van Camp, the writer?

I get up at 4:15 am and get to work until our son gets up and then it's Enjoy The Day.

What books do you like to read? Do you have any favourite authors?

I read everything: I just finished Fire Girl by Tony Abbott and loved it and I read Indiscretion by Charles Dubow over and over when I'm on planes. I've been reading The Walking Dead comic for over a decade now. It never lets up!

You've been published in so many different genres: graphic novels, short stories, novels and books for children and babies. Do you think that writing across platforms and genres is more difficult than focusing on one particular thing (say, writing novels), which is something that many writers choose to do?

Each genre has its own rules so when you can work in several genres it just feels so great that, as a fan first, you are finally contributing to something you love so much.

What type of book do you find easiest to write, and what is the most difficult for you?

Each is the boss. It's all instinct and hard work.

Your graphic novels have been written on topics that young people face, such as sexual health, restorative justice and peacemaking. How have those graphic novels been used, and have you had any readers respond to those books in a way that you never thought of when you were writing them?

We gave 10,000 copies of our comic on sexual health, *Kiss Me Deadly* (artist: Chris Auchter) away for free across the NWT. We gave 20,000 copies of our comic, *Path of the Warrior*, away for free across BC with my friend Steve Sanderson as the artist. I am so proud of that. I receive great feedback all the time from readers.

You've made your books available—for free—in Braille, and your books have been translated into several First Nations languages. How did all of that come about?

It's always been my wish to see our books in Braille and in our Indigenous languages and I've been lucky enough to work with publishers and editors who share this vision with me. *Mahsi cho*, SetBC, for making our Braille editions possible. *Mahsi cho*, Orca Book Publishers and Highwater Press for working so hard on the Bush Cree, Dene and South Slave Editions of our graphic novel *Three Feathers*. I'm so grateful to the South Slave Education Council in Fort Smith for funding the translations.

Do you want each book to stand on its own, or are you trying to build an interconnected body of work?

So many of my books are interconnected through characters. One day I'll sit down and write out how it all connects but, right now, it's still unfolding.

AU's Writer-in-Residence program is a bit contradictory because of its distance learning format where students are spread across the globe. How do you see your role at AU, and what would you like to achieve through your term? How can you unite students who love creative writing but do not have the physical "hub" at AU like typical universities have?

I read everything anyone sends me so keep it coming please!

Have any students responded yet to the invitation to contact you about their writing?

I'm working with five writers full on. I'm reading everything they're sending me. I love it.

Your talk on February 16th is about the creative process. Can you give us a teaser about what will be covered in it?

I'm going to do a literary reading of my new work with my book, *Moccasin Square Gardens*, due out this Fall with Douglas&McIntyre. It's such a fun book and I look forward to finally sharing what I've been working on for the past two years. I'm also going to praise so many of the writers in the room for inspiring me to do my very best. It's going to be fun. I've been working with a few writers for the past two months and they are fantastic. I hope they are in the room so I can honour them. I love this job!

To find out more about Richard Van Camp and his work, go to his website <http://www.richardvancamp.com>

More information about AU's Writer in Residence Program can be found at <http://writer-in-residence.athabasca.ca/index.php>

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



Pulling Heartstrings on a Shoestring Doing Valentine's Day on the cheap.

Barbara Lehtiniemi



Valentine's Day will soon be here. Finding the right gift for your sweetie can be stressful at the best of times. For those living on a tight budget, the stress is amplified. However, marking Valentine's Day need not be expensive. With a little imagination, you can express your love without straining your bank account.

Here are a dozen Valentine's Day suggestions that range from free to less than \$20:

1. Start the day off right. Sneak out of bed early, fetch take-out coffee and a breakfast bagel, and deliver it just as your partner is waking up.
2. Buy some plastic heart decorations from the dollar store and hang them from the branches of a tree outside or light fixtures inside.
3. Terms of endearment. Create a crossword or word-search puzzle using words, such as place names and events, special to the two of you.
4. Just this once. Do a household chore usually performed by your partner. Put a red heart in a suitable place to signal that a) you've done it, and b) it was just this once.
5. Sweets for your sweetie. Buy a special coffee mug and fill it with your partner's favourite candy or chocolate treats.
6. Token of your affection. Select a digital photo of the two of you, take it to a discount photo processing outlet, and have it printed on a deck of playing cards, key chain, or coffee mug.
7. Romantic touch. Buy some roses or petals from a discount florist and scatter them inside your partner's car, on their desk, or around the bedroom.
8. Put some bounce in the day. Buy a dozen red and white balloons from the dollar store, inflate them, then decorate a room with them.
9. Let me count the ways. Buy a pad of pink-coloured post-it notes. Write something you like about your partner on each note. Stick the notes in places they'll discover them throughout the day, or between the pages of a book they're currently reading.
10. Put a shine on it. Contrive to borrow your partner's car for an errand, and then take it through a carwash.
11. Indulge in nostalgia. Buy or borrow a board game that your partner loved as a child, then spend the evening playing it with them.
12. Who needs moonlight? Take advantage of a moonless sky Valentine's night and take your sweetie on a romantic stroll to gaze at the stars.

Valentine's Day can be stressful if you're strapped for cash. But, as the song goes, "money can't buy you love." With little or no cash and a bit of imagination, you can still pull your sweetie's heartstrings this Valentine's Day.

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



In Conversation with Via Intercom

Wanda Waterman



Thinking with Art: *Buzz Buzz Buzz Vertigo* Delivers Teen Angst Laced with Tenderness and Irony

Via Intercom is a Brooklyn-based duo almost too real for their own good, generating many-layered music to accompany lyrics with multiple meanings. On December 8, 2017, they released *Buzz Buzz Buzz Vertigo*, an album I've had on repeat for weeks, and not just because the seventh track gave me a case of the willies when, alone, late at night, I listened to

it for the first time.

The duo is comprised of Maggie Colgan on vocals, glockenspiel, synthesizer, and assorted electronic instruments, and Stevie Jick on vocals, guitar, bass, drum machine, trumpet, and still more assorted electronic instruments. The two are joined on the album by Hannah Glass on violin, Adam Kane on a drum machine, and Geoffrey Genova on vocals in "City of Smiles." It sounds like they stopped at nothing to get exactly the sounds they were hearing in their heads, creating their own original blend of analog and digitally-based sounds.

In a weird way the album ennobles the most awkward developmental phase of a human life. There's no guile here, no cheap attempts to guild the lily; yes, adolescence is hell. There's a narrative thread, voiced by Colgan, that never does resolve on its own, so you'll have to make up your own ending. The place where it comes from is a place of pain, but the music is so beautiful, the lyrics so authentic, so full of irony and tenderness that you want to jump in and join this bizarre little micro-universe and create your own story in it.

Luckily the duo agreed to answer our questions about the album and what it is about them that brought them to create such delightful work.

What were your early years like?

MAGGIE: I think I spent them in my imagination. I was really into fairies and tiny plant people and toadstools. I wasn't good at actually being present; I'd walk around and see little people flying around or a mouse talking to me, etc.

What role did music play in your childhood?

STEVIE: I've played and written music since I was really little. I would wait until no one was home to quietly sing and play guitar. I recorded hundreds of clunky little songs on Garageband that I would email to one or two friends with subject lines like "UNFINISHED," or "PLACEHOLDER LYRICS—" something to absolve me of criticism. I think it was really important to be able to share myself through music, though, as sheepishly as I did it.

What was the strangest thing that happened to you as a child?

STEVIE: This doesn't really have to do with anything, but when I was very young my parents left me home alone and I decided to go outside. I remember this thing on the ground. It kind of looked like a leaf. But it had "evil" vibes to it. I got a stick and went to poke it, and it recoiled into itself, like it folded up a little bit. I moved the stick back and it opened up. I did it again. I never touched it; it responded anyway. I got nervous and went back inside. The memory is really faded and distorted, but I remember the feeling of something being wrong, or scary—an inanimate object reacting to me. I still don't know what it was.

Your lyrics and music have a surreal quality. Is this how you see the world?

MAGGIE: I guess so. One time I was in this short story class and I decided to write a regular, realistic story so everyone would just "get" it and I wouldn't have to explain what was going on.

The day of my critique the professor opened with, "So, what is this world? Let's define the laws of people and physics, since they're clearly not the same as our own!"

Crushing. Never doing that again.

What's the story behind the song "In My Mind?"

STEVIE: "In My Mind" is from an early experiment, trying to write songs and text in conjunction with each other. It was our first "Let's write something together, back and forth—I make a character, you make a character."

We returned to it later on in the writing of the album and decided to finish it. Looking back, I think in many ways it set the tone for that whole little world we created, in terms of how the characters interact, what level of surrealism there is, and what kinds of drama and dilemmas they're dealing with. The stories are made up, but the feelings are representative of things we've felt in real life.

Behind "Helen?"

"Helen" was written more from a personal conversation I had with a friend. I actually wrote it a long time ago but kept it to myself for a few years because I thought it was too simple and emotionally driven. Maggie actually wrote a long introductory passage for it that we played around with for a while.

Ultimately we decided to keep only the first line: "Here you are, my tiny friend, my imaginary friend."

I have to say I had a slight crisis of paranoia at hearing my first name repeated in such bizarre lyrical contexts. Who is the "Wanda" in these songs?

MAGGIE: Oh, whoops. That's hilarious. I honestly forgot that someone named Wanda might listen to these songs. I think Wanda just is who she is—she's not really based on anybody. She's herself. When I write I just sort of sit around and wait for a character to introduce themselves and develop enough trust with me to get to know them. But I look up to her. She does a lot of things that I've never had the courage to do.

What's your next project?

STEVIE: We're working on a number of lyric videos. We don't have much experience with film, but we've spent a lot of time with the vibe of the album, so it's been fun working on representing it visually. We have one for "The Photographer" that's coming out very soon, and one for "Only Boy" that's getting ready.

In what way do you think music in general has changed since 2000?

STEVIE: I think people use more computers. Consumers are more accepting, artists are more interested, technology is more accessible, and it all feeds into one another.

I remember hearing auto-tune and electronic beats in 2000 and being really turned off because it didn't have the nuances of a human interacting with a physical instrument. Granted I was eight years old and only listened to classic rock, but it took a few years to get a feel for how a full human could really show themselves through computer music.

We used a lot of little homemade electronic instruments in *Buzz Buzz Buzz Vertigo*, and were especially careful that we were connecting our physical bodies to the electronic sounds. That's how I hope that computer music continues to evolve, involving more and more of the human with the computer.

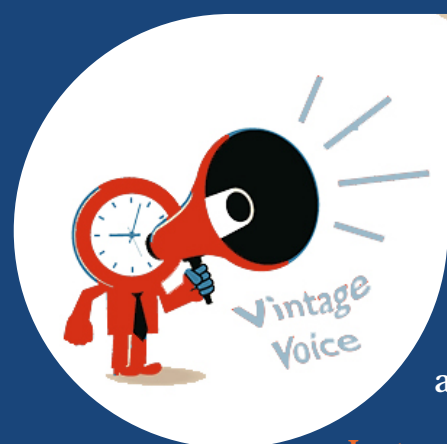
Is your writing—or choice of musical genre—influenced at all by current political conditions? If so, how?

MAGGIE: Yes, definitely. I don't think it's possible to make anything that's not influenced by political conditions; how we live is decided by politics. And the art I make is me processing, so this album is me questioning myself, the structures around me, and how I and my peers are holding them up or breaking them down.

I think the current political situation is just an exemplification of what was already there, so our work is more side-eyeing our age-old systems than reacting to the immediate administration. I mean, what has really been going on in that sacred idol of white upper middleclass suburbia? A lot.

Its biggest problem is not that the teens are bored and doing jenkem! I want to look critically at it, see where I come from, how I'm part of everything that's fucked up in the US.

I'm thinking with art.



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

Is your call really important to them? Taking turns on both sides of the call centre desk.

Strange attraction. Harried student Audrey Karperien takes a break from coding to ponder the algorithm of attraction. "But then, with the help of the shirtless men outside my window, what strange attraction is and is not started coming clear." *The Love Code*, August 14, 2002.

Just another little piece of my heart. Writer Nadine Boulos-Jarvis wonders why there's no class on how to mend a broken heart. "There was never any instruction on how to recover from someone punching their hand right through your chest and pulling your heart out, following a quick run through a meat processor and then a soak in acid." *The Next Step*, December 10, 2003

The Fit Student Tame That Fanatic

Marie Well



Would you read an unknown author's essay on finding fame? A homeless guy's article on making millions? A sickly woman's writeup on health and fitness?

Not long ago, my health dropped so drastically I feared dying before my 50th birthday. I felt nauseated most days, so tired I could barely open my eyes to read. So, my doc warned, "Change your diet and get fit!"

Within four months of weightlifting, I felt fitter and looked younger. I started running short distances. Now, seven months later, I can muster five-mile bicycle commutes.

After each workout, I review my calorie app, ogling whether to gulp one more stalk of kale, scoop of natural peanut butter, or cup of coconut milk. I then vet my wish-list of veggies, studying which ones give the most nutritional gain. Just today, I swallowed over ten servings fruits and vegetables.

But then, last week, my tiny suits got looser. Worried about anorexia, I filled out an online test for eating disorders. To my surprise, I had little need to be concerned about anorexia. Instead, I scored high for binge eating, compulsive eating, and obesity disorders, all blameworthy for my obsessions with health.

So, what do health obsessions look like? When I gobble more calories than burned, my legs go wild on stationary bikes. My muscles swell lifting man-sized dumbbells. If I don't burn every calorie, I add calisthenics.

Yesterday, a friend groaned, "Stop weighing food. Stop recording every calorie. Stop rereading top ten benefits of every vegetable you desire." Flustered, I picked up a book on eating disorders. To my shock, the book verified her views.

My goal now? Tame the fanaticism. But health obsessions offer some benefits, don't they? Of course! One year from now, I'll have the stamina to cycle marathons.

Want more benefits from health and fitness? Daniel G. Amen, MD, argues for exercise in his book *Change Your Brain Change Your Body*.

- If you feel sickly, start exercising: "Stop using excuses to avoid exercise. In many cases, exercise will help eliminate or minimize the source of your excuse, such as pain or health conditions" (p. 125).
- Even if not sickly, exercise snowballs health gains: "When you are physically active, you are more likely to eat foods that are good for you, to get more sleep, and to take better care of your health in general" (p. 117).
- And exercise fuels fun: "When you make exercise a habit, it also pumps up your energy levels and keeps you from feeling lethargic That makes you more likely to go out and do the things you love to do, which burns even more calories and keeps you looking and feeling good" (p. 116).

- Exercise can make all your New Year's resolutions true: "If you want to quit smoking, stop drinking, calm stress, or eat a healthier diet, exercising can help you achieve these goals" (p. 117).
- Exercise raises GPA's, too: "Students in the fifth, seventh, and ninth grades with the highest fitness levels also scored highest on standardized reading and math tests On the other end of the scale, the students in these grades who were least physically fit had the lowest academic scores" (p. 111).
- Exercise keeps you out of jail: "Compared to teens who watch a lot of TV, those who take part in a wide variety of physical activities are less likely to engage in risky behaviors, such as drinking, smoking drugs, violence, sex, and delinquency" (p. 118).
- Best of all, when you get healthy, your loved ones often do, too: "Health-conscious friends improve their health and their friends' health as well ... [You] can influence your whole network of friends and family" (p. 79).

A common belief says health is 80% food and 20% exercise. So, do health obsessions birth Olympians? Centenarians? Or merely self-conscious egos?

Well, if you never push aside beets for treats, you may need treatment. A better answer? Indulge some days in your deepest desired dish.



Scholarship of the Week

Digging up scholarship treasure for AU students.

Scholarship name: TAC Foundation Scholarships

Sponsored by: Transportation Association of Canada

Deadline: February 28, 2018

Potential payout: up to \$5000

Eligibility restriction: Applicants must be Canadian citizens or permanent residents, be enrolled in a post-secondary institution in a program related to the transportation field as outlined in the [eligibility criteria](#), have at least a B-grade average, and will graduate by August 31, 2019.

What's required: An online application form, including info on your educational and volunteer pursuits and a 300-word essay on the future of transportation in Canada, along with an official academic transcript, a resumé, and an academic reference.

Tips: Read the application form carefully. Note that the academic reference is also submitted online, but separately.

Where to get info: www.tac-atc.ca/en/about-us/tac-foundation/scholarships



The Poetic Side of Valentine's Day

Deanna Roney



Valentine's day is almost here. There are lots of traditions among couples, some influenced by the consumer culture, while others not. I am all for celebrating it, or not, in your own way. One thing that comes to mind, though, with the tradition of Valentine's day is poetry.

I started to do a poetry challenge a while ago. It is a weekly check-in and, in the week prior, you had to either write something, read something, or discover something poetry related. When I started this challenge, poetry felt like it was a lost art form. There are Literary magazines that publish poetry, but I

wasn't seeing poetry books—at least not at the frequency of fiction or nonfiction.

However, since starting this challenge I have found that poetry is not a lost art form. There is a thriving poetry community and, once you start looking, it is everywhere. I have discovered some amazing books of poetry—and some that were not so great. Like any book, a lot of it depends on personal taste; a poem that might speak to one person falls flat on someone else. But there is a rich and diverse community out there. One book that I picked up while browsing the Coach House website was *My Ariel* by Sina Queyras, this is one that I would read bits and pieces at a time, but her voice is so intriguing, and her words are so elegant, that reading it distracts me from everything else going on around me. This is the same publisher of *Suzanne* by Anais Barbeau-Lavalette which was longlisted for 2018 Canada Reads (though sadly it was not shortlisted). So, this is a publisher I will be going back to and keeping an eye on upcoming books.

Another great poet I have discovered is Emily Berry. Her book of poetry *Stranger, Baby* is about her dealing with the loss of her mother. Her style is unique from the other poets I have read. Berry's words are raw and touching but they still maintain a beautiful flow. She is one of the newest discoveries and I will be checking out her other work. And while she is trying to overcome her grief her words portray a sense of self-discovery.

I find that sometimes poetry can read as obscure or it relies too heavily on romantic heartbreak. And while poetry about heartbreak has its place, sometimes it begins to be a bit too much, there are other things to explore and that is what these two poets do, for me at least. There is an exploration of human experiences and feelings, but it feels grounded; the reader is not left adrift in the same sounding poems about the same thing for too long.

Another poet that was recently recommended to me, and I don't know how I didn't know about her earlier (because now that I have been reading her I am seeing her name everywhere) is Mary Oliver. She is a renowned poet and she talks a lot about the experience of being outdoors, being in nature, and just appreciating the moment out there. She is very down to earth, and her words show how important it is to just be present—how much a person can take from even the most mundane moment.

Poetry isn't just for Valentine's day cards (though this is a good place for some), poetry is something that can be enjoyed every day. There is a poet and a style out there, I believe, for everyone. I change which book I am reading depending on my mood—my present tastes. And this generally means having several on the go. These books are meant to be savoured, I don't read through them in one go like I do a novel, but in bits and pieces as they call to me.

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



Course Exam

Brittany Daigle

CMIS 245—Computers and Management Information Systems

According to the syllabus, CMIS 245 (Computers and Management Information Systems) is a three-credit business and administrative studies course that teaches students the skills required to use microcomputer applications (PC applications) effectively. This course has software requirements, including the PC version of Microsoft Office 365 or Microsoft Office 2016 and the four main applications: Word, Excel, PowerPoint, and Access. Also, students cannot complete this course using a Mac computer, due to the lack of compatibility.

Computers and Management Information Systems has no final exam. But it contains twelve lessons and four assignments worth twenty-five percent each. The first lesson covers the fundamentals of Microsoft Office. Lessons two through four cover one of the most commonly used Microsoft Office applications, Word. These three lessons cover topics such as paragraph formatting, applying borders, lists, columns, word wrapping, text highlighting, formatting tables, and adding formulas. Then lessons five through seven cover Excel and focus on topics such as creating spreadsheets, inputting different formulas, entering data, organizing data, and formatting data. The third application, Access, is covered in lessons eight through ten and go through filters, sorting, functions, creating databases, foreign keys, and queries. Last, lessons eleven and twelve focus on PowerPoint and cover creating slides, viewing slides in different ways, slide transitions, animations, adding images, and adding tables.

Each of the four assignments have students completing Capstone Exercises that are located within the textbook. The Word, Excel, and Access assignments have three Capstone Exercises, while the PowerPoint assignment only has two. Prior to beginning the assignments, students will have to download a folder containing a bunch of files that will be used throughout the entire course. The Capstone Exercises in the textbook have students opening the appropriate downloaded file and altering, editing, rearranging, and adding the content of that file. Students may have to insert Excel tables in a Word document, rearrange text within a paragraph, change fonts and colors of certain text, etc. This may seem easy, but the instructions within the textbook and the specific assignment instructions must be followed with absolute precision or points will be deducted.

Also, the Capstone Exercises are quite lengthy and have a lot of detail. I would recommend that students use the highlighter built into the textbook to highlight each step of the Capstone Exercise that they have completed. I also recommend completing each of the Capstone Exercises in one sitting. I found it extremely difficult to return to the exercise after taking a break from it for a while.

When I first read the online syllabus for CMIS 245 I thought it would be extremely easy and that I could have had it done in less than a month. While I am not saying that it was hard, but following the instructions one hundred percent was sometimes a challenge and time consuming. The main challenges that I faced were applying the correct formulas and functions and locating some of the specific instructions, such as certain font colors and specific header styles. Also, prior to enrolling I had absolutely no experience using Access, which slowed me down significantly. Though, surprisingly, I got a higher mark on the Access assignment than I did the Word assignment and I have a lot of experience with Word. All that being said, with the right amount of effort and dedication to the course, it could be easily completed within four weeks (one week for each assignment).

Personally, I would recommend this course to every single Athabasca University student. It is quite easy and, at the very least, it gives students more in-depth knowledge of Microsoft Office and Word, which are used very frequently. Overall, I can honestly say that I learned a lot of things regarding each of the Microsoft Office applications that I know will be useful in the future.

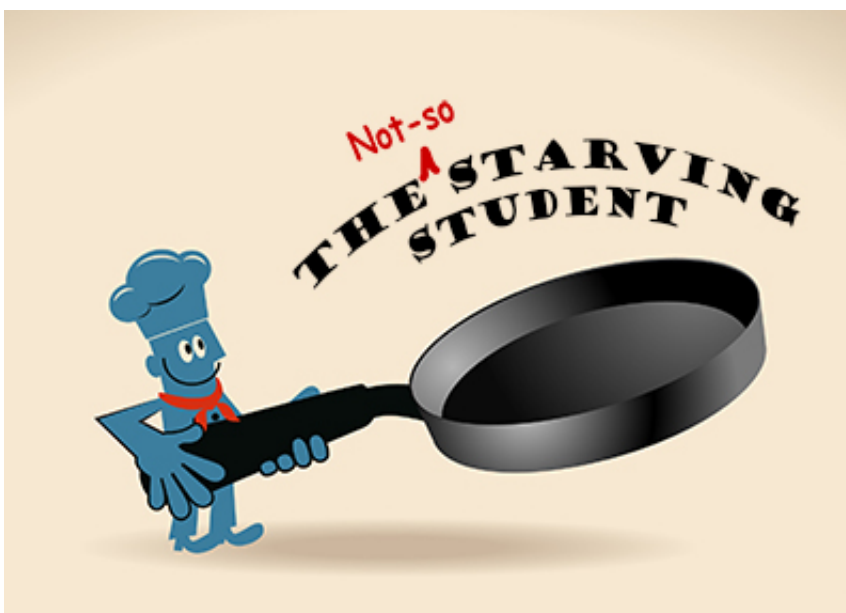
Whether CMIS 245 is a requirement for your program or if it is just a course you are interested in taking, you will learn valuable, commonly used programs; meanwhile, lessening your workload from taking a relatively easy course and not having to write a final exam.

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



The Not-So Starving Student DIY Valentine's Bouquet

Xin Xu



Roses are red.

Violets are blue.

Some bouquets are best eaten,

So here's one for you (or your special someone).

Personally, looking at a fresh bouquet of roses only to know that in less than a week I will have to discard the wilted contents into the trash can be quite depressing. I would much prefer having an edible version of the traditional bouquet. I'm not talking about chocolate bouquets either.

Since the invention of the fruit bouquet, gift-receivers could nibble away at the contents without feeling guilty. I came across

this idea after receiving a pre-arranged gift from my loved one a year ago. On Valentine's Day, 2016, my sweetheart ordered a fresh bouquet delivered to my front door from Edible Arrangements, a company that creates these masterpieces for any occasion. Fortunately, that doesn't stop you from being creative and attempting this feat this yourself. Even better, the prep time is quite short but the final result can be spectacular. Here is your DIY survival guide for creating the ultimate fruit bouquet.

The Materials

Cookie cutter shapes - purchased from local supermarket



Your significant other's favorite fruits - purchased from local supermarket

My favorite fruits for this gift include strawberries, pineapples, cantaloupes, honeydew, grapes and kiwis



Floral foam base - purchased from arts/crafts store/dollar stores



Vase - purchased from arts and crafts store or dollar store



Bamboo skewers - purchased at the dollar store



Kale for decor (optional) - purchased from local supermarket



The Message

Add a unique message for your significant other attached to the wrapping of your bouquet. It helps add meaning to your gift and make it extra memorable for that special someone. Perhaps include a handwritten message of a favorite memory you have with them or some ideas of things you like about them and places you'd like to go with them. The possibilities are endless, so be creative and customize this message.

The Assembly

Once you have all the ingredients gathered, start by washing and peeling each fruit as needed. Next, slice your fruits into chunks and use cookie cutters to carve each piece into a consistent size and shape. The shapes can then be added to skewers in any particular order. I prefer to cluster the same type of fruit on a particular skewer. For example, the pineapples will be on one skewer while the strawberries on another. Once you have individual skewers prepared, the most exciting part of the project follows; assembling the skewers onto your foam base.



There's no right or wrong way to arrange the bouquet so you can be as artistic or conservative as you would like. I prefer to color-coordinate my arrangement so that the outer circle of the bouquet would include strawberries while each inner ring of the bouquet would involve a different color.



The Delivery

Before delivering the final product to your partner, make sure to package the bouquet with gift wrapping paper. Meticulously wrap the plastic wrapping paper as a little extra effort could go a long way.

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



Canadian Education News

Scott Jacobsen



Canadian Investment in the Global Partnership for Education

The *PIE News* said that Prime Minister Justin Trudeau made an announcement about the increase in commitment for the Global Partnership for Education (GPE).

As part of what his office called the “Feminist International Assistance Policy,” Trudeau made a pledge during the World Economic Forum to increase Canada’s commitment to 180 million dollars between 2018 and 2020. cement was made at the

“The \$180 million pledge follows Canadian investments of \$57.6 million between 2011-2014, and \$120 million for the 2015-2018 period,” PIE News reports. GPE intends to raise US\$3.1 billion from 2018-2020. The money would support up to 89 developing countries.

These will improve the access and quality to education for 870 million children and youth. Based in the pledges proclaimed for the 2018-2020 period, there will be an additional help to 19 million children for the completion of primary school.

10,000 PhD Project to See Results of Graduate Education

University Affairs noted that the understanding of where PhDs earners end up is an important question deserving of an answer. The University of Toronto looked into the situation with research on about 10,000 students from the University of Toronto who earned PhDs.

The intention was to discover what happened to the PhD graduates in their careers post-doctoral graduation. The data was used from the school of graduate studies at the University of Toronto. The initiative is called the 10,000 PhDs Project.

Importantly, only 60% of the doctoral graduates from the University of Toronto work in higher education: “teaching-stream faculty, full-time and part-time lecturers, adjunct professors, research associates, postdoctoral fellows and university administrators. Less than one-third have tenure-track positions.”

The University of Toronto Professor of Biochemistry Reinhart Reithmeier led the project and said, “It blew me away. They are doing amazing things [with their PhDs]...The issue was that I, as chair, didn’t know about that and most faculty members, except anecdotally, didn’t know. Most importantly, our students didn’t know about it.”

PEI Does the Best at Early Childhood Education

CBC News: PEI reports that Prince Edward Island is doing the best in terms of education for early childhood education according to the Atkinson Centre. Kerry McCuaig, Fellow in Early Childhood Policy at the University of Toronto explained how good governance and professional recognition for childhood educators were areas where PEI is doing well.

The Minister of Education, Early Learning and Culture, Jordan Brown said more money will be put forward for the early childhood education in PEI in 2018, as the year develops. Brown said, “One of the things you do very well and you’re one of the few provinces to do it is that in early years centres, P.E.I. provides equity of access for children with special needs.”

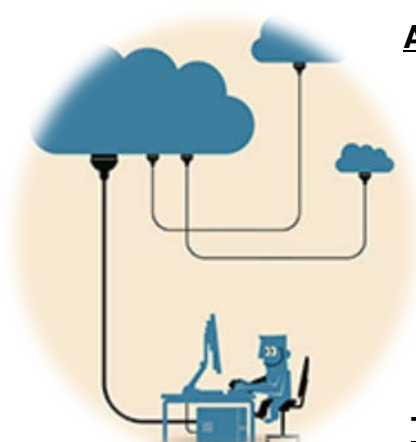
McCuaig stated that the though early childhood education services have a long way to go; the comparison with Europe shows that the Canadian system, even the PEI one, “would still be very far behind.”

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



Student Sizzle — AU's Hot Social Media Topics

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



AthaU Facebook Group

A lively discussion follows Kazlow's query about how AU marks compare with those of other institutions. Jodi and other students have noticed they haven't yet received access to courses with a March 1 start date. Miranda wonders if there's any way to see grades for older assignments; it's not looking good so far.

Other posts include grouped study courses, Letters of Permission, student funding, and courses CHEM 311, CLST 325, and MATH 215.

Twitter

@AthabascaU tweets: "To celebrate #BlackHistoryMonth, an #AthaU Professor of History & Humanities discusses one of the cultural fields to which black artists have made huge contributions: jazz music. <http://ow.ly/TpMy30i6cBT>."

@AthabascaUBiz tweets: "Thinking about an #MBA? Think #AthaU! Your future career will thank you. MBA application deadline is Feb 15 : <https://goo.gl/RWqGB4> .



Dear
Barb

Barbara Godin

Chronic Control

Dear Barb:

Hi, recently I've been diagnosed with fibromyalgia. It was a total relief to finally put a name to what is wrong with me. The problem I've been having is that most of my family and friends think my illness is all in my head. Since fibromyalgia is one of those illnesses that are diagnosed through the process of elimination, it's difficult for them to believe that I really am sick. I am exhausted from trying to explain what fibromyalgia is, now I just tell everyone to Google it. I know it shouldn't bother me, but it does. Unless you are in bed with a fever or puking your guts out, no one thinks you are sick! Why can't people accept that someone is ill, even though they can't see it? Do you have any suggestions on how I should handle this without getting upset? Help, Kristin.

Hi Kristin:

Unfortunately, it is difficult for people to believe something they can't see, and they don't know how it feels to be you. There are many ways to handle this. Your initial approach, that they Google fibromyalgia is an excellent start. You could also offer to send them an email with a link that describes your illness and its effects. Reactions will differ, you will encounter people who will offer advice on various ways to heal your illness. They may suggest natural remedies, or a doctor who healed a friend with the same condition as you. At this point mention that you have your own doctors and you are happy with them. Thank them and

change the subject. If they persist, choose to politely leave their company. There is a lot of information online about dealing with chronic illness. The eBook *7 Stages of Grief of Chronic Illness* by Katherine T. Owen is available online for free and it contains most of the information you will need. Best of luck Kristin.

Dear Barb:

I have a few people in my life who are very controlling and I'm having a difficult time dealing with them. They are close family members who want me to live my life according to their rules. My son, for instance does not like my ex boyfriend, so he wants me to remove all reminders of him from our house. I don't want to do that, I feel he was a part of our past and I'm fine with his pictures and other items are in our home. My son has even given me an ultimatum that if I don't remove the items he will move out. I love my son and don't want him to move out, but I don't feel I should have to modify my life to suit him. What do you think? Thanks, Katherine.

Hi Katherine:

I agree you do not have to modify your life to suit someone else. It is your house and you can decorate it as you please. When your son has his own home, he can decorate it however he likes. Controlling people try to make others fit into their reality. If you allow this to happen you will lose your own sense of reality. As hard as it is to do, you need to set boundaries. Don't be afraid to say no to your son, if he chooses to move out, that is his choice and his reality. He needs to respect you and the choices you make for your life, as much as you need to respect the choices he makes for his life. So don't be afraid to stand up for yourself. The people who want to be a part of your life, will respect your right to be who you are. Thanks for your letter.

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.





AUSU
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IMPORTANT DATES

- **Feb 7:** [Deadline to submit Nomination for Election](#)
- **Feb 9:** [Deadline to register in a course starting Mar 1](#)
- **Feb 12:** [AUSU Election Candidates Announced](#)
- **Feb 13:** [AUSU Council Meeting](#)
- **Feb 15:** [March degree requirements deadline](#)
- **Feb 28:** [Deadline to apply for course extension for Mar](#)
- **Feb 28:** [AUSU General Election Ballots Open](#)

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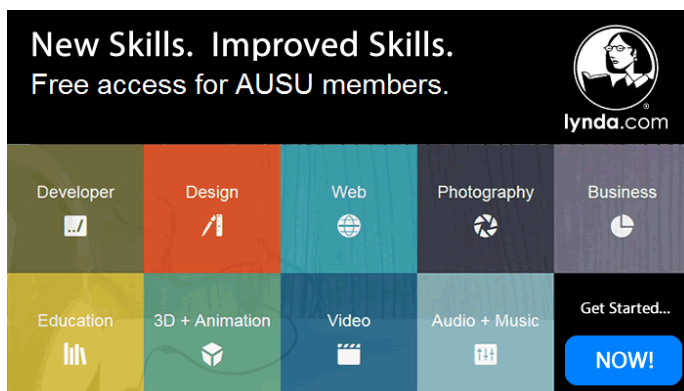
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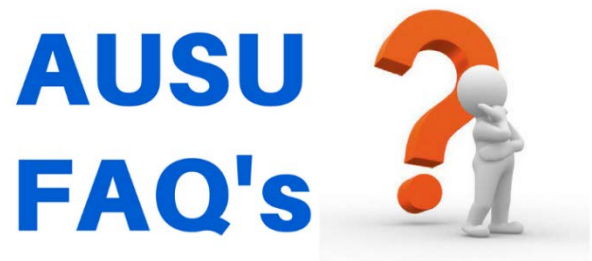
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- HTML Essential Training
- Access Essential Training
- Excel Essential Training
- WordPress Essential Training
- Time Management Fundamentals
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AUSU FAQ's

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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 and we will do our best to assist you!

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



CLASSIFIEDS

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

THE VOICE

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