



# THE VOICE

Vol 26 Issue 10 2018-03-09

## **Minds we Meet**

Interviewing Students Like You!

## **More than a Mouthful**

Talk about Steak & Blowjob Day

## **Fly on the Wall**

The Road of Perception

*Plus:*

*Letting Go*

*50 Ways to Leave Your Lover  
and much more!*



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

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

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

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 subscriber list with anyone.  
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Volume 25, Issue 43

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 Magazine

ISSN 2561-3634

# LETTERS TO THE EDITOR



Hi there,

This evening I read an article about a women in politics meeting attended by the writer, Jaclyn van Beek. This article bothered me because it kind of came off as a contemptuous one-sided attack.

The implication was made that these issues are multifaceted, but also that the author's views are the right ones. The snide tone implies that if the reader disagrees with the author then the reader is incapable of understanding these issues. Or, more bluntly, implies the reader is stupid.

I'm new to reading university newspapers/magazines, but I guess I expected more. More thoughtful, more substantial, and more inclusive.

What I'm getting at is, I thought the articles written by this person came off as vapid and derogatory and as an early reader I was put off by it. There should be some element to an article beyond someone's opinion and I didn't see that here.

On the upside, it looks like the newspaper is always looking for new contributors.

Thanks,

Sara

*Hi Sara, while I agree that Jaclyn's articles certainly have a strong viewpoint and can be an uncomfortable read for someone with the opposing view (myself included), I disagree with your assessments of the tone, implication, or that the articles were vapid or derogatory. Challenging? Absolutely. But that's a different thing.*

*As a magazine "by AU students" however, inclusive, to me, means including even the opinions we don't agree with. That said, I would love to receive an article from someone with a point of view opposing Jaclyn's, as I think (and you demonstrate) AU students come from all sides of the political spectrum.*

**We love to hear from you!**

**Send your questions and comments to [voicemagazine.org](http://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

### Balancing in Easy Mode

Karl Low



I had to think long and hard about the picture to go with one of our articles this week. In the end, I chose the one that has more risk of being misinterpreted but is also more powerful. The article in question is “More than a Mouthful” and you can see the picture chosen there. In one sense, especially coupled with the subject matter of the article, the picture can be seen as objectifying. In another, however, it can be seen as a recognition of female power, as the woman seems to be the one in control of, and enjoying, the situation.

The other picture in contention was a much “safer” image. An image that avoided any calls to sexuality even though the subject of the article itself is certainly sexual (or is that just me? After all, the image on this issue’s cover suggests yet another interpretation, even if one that I expect most people don’t think of) Yet, in its own way, this image can be seen as more reflective of inherent sexism, with the woman relegated once again to the duties of cook and server (presumably of a man, given



the subject matter of the article). And while that may be a position that a woman is entirely happy with, it shouldn’t be the default that we see and expect women to live within. That the second picture is “safer” is something that I think should be called into question.

This question was especially relevant given the letter received after last week’s article “A Meeting of Women in Politics.” As a white male, there’s a strange balance that I need to maintain. On the one hand, I am the beneficiary of western society’s “easy mode”, and I try to be mindful of that and of when I am unconsciously being sexist or racist. On the other, at a certain point, being mindful of one’s own advantages can cross over into simply denigrating yourself and those like you. And where that line is, as evidenced by both the article last week and the responding letter this week, is itself an issue open to interpretation.

It’s tempting to say that the era of #MeToo has made this all more difficult, but that’s a cop-out, in my opinion. The problems that #MeToo are exposing didn’t just start when the hash-tag did. And saying #MeToo is making things more difficult is essentially saying that how things were before #MeToo was a better situation. It wasn’t. It should have always been this difficult to engage in sexism or racism, it just hasn’t been.

At any rate, the choice has been made. I think I made the right one, but maybe you have a different opinion. I’d love to hear it.

Beyond that, this week our feature article is an interview with a student who, like many of us, I’m sure, made a mistake with her education early on and has found AU to be a way that lets her fix it. We also have some recipes for once you’ve gone beyond More than a Mouthful and are ready to celebrate Pi day, which also falls on March 14. Plus we look at when it might be time to cut something from your life, whether a relationship or something else. And, of course our events, news, scholarships, thoughtful musings from student and more.

Enjoy the read!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Karl".

# MINDS WE MEET



*Katy Lowe is a 29-year-old mother of three. She has been a student with AU since November 2017 and is currently finishing up her first set of finals. One of the few that are born and raised and currently living in Calgary, Alberta, she looks forward to chinooks to break up long, bitter cold winters. She enjoys running along the amazing trails Calgary has to offer and has a self-proclaimed “TV problem,” enjoying her favorites on repeat while keeping warm.*

## **What are you studying at AU?**

I am currently studying psychology at AU. I have 3 children, 2 of them with special needs. In my experience with raising them and bringing them to daily therapy sessions and learning about their behaviors and how to help them sparked my own love and passion for the field. As they became a little less intense and dependent I decided to pursue a career in it, which led me to the stepping stones of an undergrad majoring in psychology.

## **Did you go to post-secondary prior to AU?**

Oh, this is a fun question. Yes and no. When I was 17/18 I was a student at the U of C. I was there on several scholarships and determined to pursue a degree in sociology. I decided in all of my 17 years that I was grown up and at the same time as starting university I should move out. Also, I determined that I needed my own one-bedroom apartment, not a studio, not a basement suite and not in

residency. Huge mistake. Apartments mean rent, so then I needed a full-time job. You can see where this is going I’m sure, I had six courses I was registered in, worked 40 hours a week and at the same time testing the boundaries of my new-found freedom and independence.

My studies suffered. I had the sensibility to withdraw from one particularly boring class. One day on a whim, I met a man from the Internet (this was back in 2006 when this sort of thing was very strange). I was very reluctant to meet someone online, I made sure to have my friends know my location at all times, including sitting in the restaurant pretending to be there alone watching as I met this stranger.

I quickly fell in love and within a few weeks he was inviting me to go to Mexico with him. Being the incredibly ridiculous child that I was I agreed, neglecting my school work – too ashamed to withdraw and just ran away from my problems at school, ran all the way to Mexico.

I did marry that guy, so I mean that worked out. However, now as an adult wanting to pursue education I have a great big 0.0 GPA stamped on my record as a result of a mistake I made as a child. The avenue to post-secondary for me was a school that looked at my potential and not my past misgivings. This school was AU, whose requirements were only to be over 16 and then prove myself within my courses, so here I am.

**What has been your most enjoyable AU course that you would recommend to other students?**

Math 215 surprisingly! I decided to take the courses I dreaded the most first and this included Math 215 (Stats) and it turned out to be my favorite! As interesting as I've found other courses to be in terms of material, I loved that the math course was just black and white answers – nothing open to interpretation. It was like solving a puzzle at the end of a stressful day trying to learn other course work.

**What are your academic goals for 2018?**

For 2018, I am finishing my first semester this February, which I am really looking forward to. Validating that I CAN, in fact, get a degree. I plan to finish another 2 semesters following this.

**What are you hoping to do with your education from AU?**

And again my rambles above kind of answer this one. I am hoping to be a psychologist working with developmental disorders in children, such as ASD, ADHD, DCD, etc.

**What is one thing you would like to complete personally in 2018?**

Well I used to run marathons. I loved running (not in the moment, but after when I'd get a medal), and in 2017 I was diagnosed with a neuromuscular autoimmune disease, myasthenia gravis. It affects your voluntary muscles, which means my mobility was compromised, by ability to talk, eat, swallow and breathe, etc. It was pretty horrible. Anyway, the upside of this is that it progressed enough for me to be approved for a specific mononuclear treatment which I was given in December and will continue to get every 4-6 months for the rest of my life – and it essentially handed me my life back. So I'm able to walk unassisted again even which is amazing. I recently started running again, and although its teeny tiny runs compared to what I used to do – for me, I'd like to run a half marathon again in 2018 – not a full one like I used to as I don't have the time to train for that anymore but a half one and I'll be very very happy!

**Where do you see yourself in 5 years?**

In school! Ha but seriously I see myself *\*just\** graduating from my undergrad and hopefully pursuing a Master's degree. 😊

**What is the last book you read?**

I'm in the middle of the outlander series. I love it and read a little bit before bed every night, it's a great way to decompress from my school work, or else I fall asleep too focused on topics I was reading earlier and wake up exhausted from doing math in my sleep all night!

**What show do you think everyone should binge watch?**

I binge watch *Scrubs* and *Friends* and *Grey's Anatomy*. Repeatedly. It drives my husband crazy because I keep restarting them over and over and although it's clear I've seen them all, I love them, and I'm not sure I'd ever tire of them. The people who haven't seen *Scrubs*? I mean, come on. Hilarious.



My love for *Scrubs* is so strong that I have named one of my children and one of my dogs after characters in the show. In fact, I have used many shows for naming inspiration.

My dogs are Jack, Swarley and Turk. Jack was named from *Will & Grace* (from a LONG time ago!). Swarley is named from *How I met your Mother* and Turk is from *Scrubs*.

My oldest child is 7 and named Elliette (from *Scrubs* too see? Different spelling though), my middle daughter Taylor (I tried for Jordan, also from *Scrubs*, but my husband put a stop to the TV names here) is 6 and my son, Evan is 4.

### How do you make cold winter days more enjoyable?

By not leaving the house! When it's truly bitter and snowing, I make a stark contrast by wearing the fluffiest, warmest pjs and slippers, drinking hot coffee and watching the snow fall as I'm incredibly toasty inside!

*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.*



## Scholarship of the Week

### Digging up scholarship treasure for AU students.

**Scholarship name:** Retail as a Career Scholarship

**Sponsored by:** Retail Council of Canada

**Deadline:** April 3, 2018, 12:00 pm EST

**Potential payout:** \$1000 to \$5000

**Eligibility restriction:** Applicants must be enrolled full- or part-time at a Canadian college or university for Fall 2018, currently working part- or full-time within the retail industry, and pursuing a post-secondary program in retail, business, fashion, or marketing.

**What's required:** An online application form, including a 250-word applicant statement, along with a multi-media presentation on the future of retail, proof of enrolment, official transcripts, and a reference letter from a current employer.

**Tips:** Read the [Application Guidelines](#) for all you need to know about submitting an application.

**Where to get info:** [www.retailcouncil.org/memberservices/retail-education/retail-as-a-career-scholarship-program](http://www.retailcouncil.org/memberservices/retail-education/retail-as-a-career-scholarship-program)



## More than a Mouthful

### Let's talk about Steak and Blowjob Day March 14

Barbara Lehtiniemi



Men: rejoice! If you tiptoed intact across the minefield of Valentine's Day last month, your reward is coming. March 14 is unofficially "Steak and Blowjob Day", when you can sit back and relax and let someone else do the work.

Or maybe not.

Steak and Blowjob Day was conceived—and this should surprise no-one—by a radio DJ. The credit generally goes to Tom Birdsey of Boston's WFNX, who introduced the Steak and BJ holiday concept on his show in 2002. However, Birdsey claimed he got the idea from—wait for it—another radio DJ, Dave Rickards, who floated the concept of a Steak and Knobber Day back in 1998.

Controversial since its inception, Steak and Blowjob Day hasn't managed to attain a comfortable position on the calendar. A 2015 article in *The Daily Dot*, "[The short, stupid history of Steak and a BJ Day](#)", states it's "unclear...whether anyone has ever actually observed it", and expresses the opinion that "the holiday exists to prompt workplace arguments or cringe-y remarks about relationships, gender equality, and—why not!—cancer." The cancer reference appears to result from an attempt to pink-wash the day as a breast cancer fundraiser, perhaps to make the idea

more palatable. But is anyone swallowing this?

Not surprisingly, reaction to the concept of Steak and Blowjob Day is sharply divided. Men's magazine *Maxim*, in their recent article, "[There's an actual holiday called 'Steak and Blowjob Day', and it's almost here](#)", called it "the greatest holiday of all time" in which "dudes everywhere are repaid for all the thought and careful planning they put into making Valentine's Day as romantic as they can manage." Meanwhile, over at the *Huffington Post*, a 2014 article headline sums up their opinion: "[Steak and BJ Day makes us want to gag](#)".

What do real people say about the concept of Steak and Blowjob Day? I conducted an informal poll of a number of worldwide acquaintances. The question I put to them was, "are you for or against this idea of a holiday, and why?" Here's what they had to say (some names have been changed to protect privacy):

First the men: Chris declares he is "for" the holiday. "I like a good steak," says Chris. Over in enlightened Europe, Pertti takes a different view. "I'm against it," Pertti says. "Not as a notion of sexual expression but as a notion of one-sidedness, mainly to fulfill the masculine way of dominance over femininity." David takes a more philosophical view. "My wife and myself have never celebrated this holiday," David says. "It isn't that we are against it or for it. We just see no need to set aside a date to have steak and amazing sex. We should be able to do that whenever we want, in my opinion. If others choose to celebrate it, that is fine with me, we just don't see the



need to." Sammy provides the last word for the men, stressing the critical importance of "doing only one thing at a time."

Now the women, who had rather more to say about it: Penny doesn't see the need for this holiday. "I thought Valentine's Day was for both men and women," she says. "I don't feel men need a holiday based on their need for a blow job." Anita has a somewhat different perspective. She feels the day is "ideal for men who do not dare to ask for it the rest of the year. For the rest it is as silly as Valentine's Day. If you can only think to be romantic or sexy with your partner one day a year, it is a bit sad. And certainly it should not be used to oblige someone, but maybe as a friendly reminder." Margot was neutral about the holiday. "I have never spent it," she says, "but it sounds fun IF you have a suitable partner."

Evelyn was one of the few people I contacted who had heard about this holiday before; she thinks it's a funny idea. "It obviously mocks the expectations guys are exposed to on Valentine's Day," she says. "Personally I never did 'celebrate' Valentine's Day; even during my longterm relationship I never received nor wanted chocolate, flowers, etc. Here in Germany I feel there is less pressure to do something special on that day. Since I do believe I have a good sense of humour, I can imagine treating my boyfriend to a surprise 'steak and blow job day'—just not on a regular basis." Christine, on the other hand, had never heard of such a day. "The name of the day might offend some people or put them under pressure," says Christine. "On the other hand I am an hedonist who thinks that celebrating joyful things is not a bad idea. Live and let live if possible. So if people enjoy it, why not... as long as others can do what they want to do."

Even if you haven't heard of Steak and Blowjob Day, millions of others have—and they've been watching Steak and BJ videos on Youtube for at least ten years. One of many videos, the animated Steak and a BJ Day Song by Warp Zone considers the pairing of fellatio and filets, while in another, Werd McCompany sets a hip-hop-inspired rhythm to its head-bobbing Steak and a BJ Anthem (It's My Day). I found both videos amusing, although the latter one had some imagery that might offend some people.

Over at Twitter, anticipation for the day is mounting. The number of tweets using the hashtag #steakandbjday began swelling in the lead-up to Valentine's Day indicating that pre-holiday excitement is building. Tweeted expressions of expectation and meat preparation tips are interspersed with commercial offerings of related merchandise, including greeting cards and bedroom accessories.

Although this holiday hasn't achieved official status, it has managed to spawn (at least one) official website. We know it's official because it says so in the name: www.officialsteakandblowjobday.com. Not only can you purchase Steak and Blowjob Day merchandise, but you can send an invitation to your partner to help you celebrate the day (a minimum \$3 donation, 80% of which goes to fight breast cancer, is required.)

The holiday is probably meant to be tongue-in-cheek, but not everyone will view it that way. While researching this topic, I noticed a marked difference in attitudes between Europeans and North Americans: the former were generally comfortable expressing thoughtful and reasoned views on the topic, while the latter were more likely to respond with humour, uneasiness—or not at all.

As with many topics surrounding relationships and sex, opening up a discussion about Steak and Blowjob Day is best approached with an open mind, a sense of humour—and realistic expectations. After all, perhaps the real function of the holiday is the discussion it stimulates.

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

## The Fly on the Wall Roads of Perception

Jason Sullivan



Winter months and distance education courses have one thing in common: they can both drag on interminably when we get bogged down. Yet, as successes pile up over the years, and remembering how far we've come since early childhood education, we can feel confident in the face of what appear to be long odds for success. We might even, for our ego's sake, retroactively adjust our judgement of the ease of our passage through education and that's fine because hey, we earned it!

As it turns out, a mere 5-10% of online education students find success, so we're

right justified in feeling proud of ourselves with each course we complete (Jaschick, 2018). There's nothing wrong with gently inflating the challenges we've encountered particularly when giving ourselves pep talks during moments of contemporary struggle with our coursework. It almost always behooves us to emphasize our potential for success.

Interpretation plays a role in how we see ourselves and the world around us, after all. So, too, do cold, hard facts, which often do not match up with stereotypes. As a recent study illustrates, “when it comes to measures of career satisfaction, humanities grads are as satisfied as those who majored in STEM” (Jaschick, 2018). So even if we are tempted to lose motivation by saying “I'll never use this, I'll just end up working a service industry job I hate,” it's worth taking a moment to buoy ourselves by researching just how content we'll be if we work hard at what we are passionate about rather than what we think we should be studying. Don't should on yourself, as the saying goes.

George Berkeley elucidated how our minds are the final arbiters of what we take to be the external world. And, as one more adage goes, common sense is not so common.

Consider the poem “The Road Not Taken” by Robert Frost. Instead of reading it for ourselves, many of us (myself included until recently!) believe it a loving souvenir of the narrator's decision to embark on a less-travelled path.

As it turns out, the words of the poem state that, when comparing the two bucolic trails, traffic “Had worn them really about the same” (Frost, online).

Only much later in life would the narrator claim:

“I shall be telling this with a sigh  
Somewhere ages and ages hence:  
Two roads diverged in a wood, and I—  
I took the one less traveled by,

And that has made all the difference.”  
(Frost, 1970)

As Berkeley explained in the 18th Century, “to exist is one thing, and to be perceived is another.” (Acton, 296). Our perceptions shape our existence and that includes how we perceive our decision to undertake further education. It's not always an easy path, yet we can choose to resist the yawning maw of apathy in the face of struggle. The existence of difficult or monotonous coursework is only one part of a given reality; the other is our chosen perception of it. Happily, we have some control over the latter. In fact, as Berkeley would have it, our perception of existence is all there is to existence.

He notes that there is pleasure or pain in every experience, and, when we encounter these in a rare and unmediated form, there appears no space between sensation and reaction. Decisions like which course to take involve meditation on the cost (pain) and benefit (pleasure) of each path. Whichever road we take, the other may still beckon in hindsight. Berkeley notes that as perceptive beings we usually do perceive space between the objects of our attention (such as challenging coursework) and our responses (such as frustration). A textbook doesn't leap up and smack us across the face, but it might feel like it does if we don't mind the gap.

Our thinking responses are then the essence of our life experience, and, being our own rather than authored by an external agent or force, these are susceptible to conscious alteration and adjustment. We can literally think and work our way out of many a problem, be it with flash cards for memorization or stream of consciousness writing for writer's block, so long as we remember that there is more wiggle room than first appears. A syllabus is inanimate, we are not.

To stimulate consideration of perceptive reality, Berkeley has his characters Philonous and Hylas say:

Phil. Upon putting your Hand near the Fire, do you perceive one simple uniform Sensation, or two distinct Sensations?

Hyl. But one simple Sensation.

Phil. Is not the Heat immediately perceived?

## AU-thentic Events Upcoming AU Related Events

### **AUSU Council Meeting**

Tues, March 13, 5:30 to 7:30 pm MDT  
Online

Hosted by AUSU

[www.ausu.org/event/march-council-meeting-2/](http://www.ausu.org/event/march-council-meeting-2/)

No pre-registration required; e-mail [admin@ausu.org](mailto:admin@ausu.org) for meeting package

### **MBA Info Session - Edmonton**

Wed, March 14, 5:30 to 7:00 pm MDT  
AU Faculty of Business, #201 13220 St Albert Trail, Edmonton AB

In person

Hosted by AU Faculty of Business

[business.athabascau.ca/event-details/mba-information-session-edmonton/](http://business.athabascau.ca/event-details/mba-information-session-edmonton/)

Register online at above link

### **AUGSA Atlantic Region Meet-up**

Wed, March 14, 8:00 to 9:00 pm ADT  
Online

Hosted by AUGSA

[www.facebook.com/events/198907014025681/](https://www.facebook.com/events/198907014025681/)

Register online at above link

### **Surviving the Ethics Approval Process Unscathed**

Thurs, March 15, 2:00 to 3:00 pm MDT  
Online

Hosted by AU Faculty of Graduate Studies

[fgs.athabascau.ca/news/presentations/](http://fgs.athabascau.ca/news/presentations/)

e-mail [fgs@athabascau.ca](mailto:fgs@athabascau.ca) with your student number to register

### **AUSU services highlight**

#### **Facebook Live Event**

Thurs, March 15, 3:00 to 4:00 pm MDT  
Online

Hosted by AUSU

[www.ausu.org/event/facebook-live-event-5/](http://www.ausu.org/event/facebook-live-event-5/)

no pre-registration required

### **Bannock and a Movie "Wings of Johnny May" Part 2**

Fri, March 16, 12:00 to 12:50 pm MDT  
Athabasca University, Peace Hills Trust Tower, 12th floor, Room 1222, 10011 - 109 Street, Edmonton AB

In-person; limited seating

Hosted by AU Centre for World Indigenous Knowledge and Research

[indigenous.athabascau.ca/documentation/Wings2.pdf](http://indigenous.athabascau.ca/documentation/Wings2.pdf)

Register by phone (780)428-2064 or e-mail [ivy1@athabascau.ca](mailto:ivy1@athabascau.ca)



Hyl. It is.

Phil. And the Pain?

Hyl. True.

Phil. Seeing therefore they are both immediately perceived at the same time, and the Fire affects you only with one simple, or uncompounded Idea, it follows that this same simple Idea is both the intense Heat immediately perceived, and the Pain; and consequently, that the intense Heat immediately perceived, is nothing distinct from a particular sort of Pain.

Hyl. It seems so.

Phil. Again, try in your Thoughts, Hylas, if you can conceive a vehement Sensation to be without Pain, or Pleasure.

Berkeley's suggestion that life is reducible to the pursuit of pleasure and avoidance of pain applies to our studies because in every moment or, say, six-minute increment, we are either being productive or unproductive. It's up to us which path to choose and that includes selecting study breaks of our choosing. Rather than becoming mired or indecisive we can take charge of our process in each abject moment as well as in the big picture. This seems to me to be Berkeley's explanatory power, to empower us to remember that we are the masters of our educational destiny.

Perspectives we take really do matter, and perhaps are the root of our success or failure. We just have to question our responses to what appear as impenetrable roadblocks; we just have to find a chink in our own mental armor. Berkeley continues:

Phil. Can any Doctrine be true that necessarily leads a Man into an Absurdity?

Hyl. Without doubt it cannot.

Phil. Is it not an Absurdity to think that the same thing should be at the same time both cold and warm?

Hyl. It is.

Phil. Suppose now one of your Hands hot, and the other cold, and that they are both at once put into the same Vessel of Water, in an intermediate State; will not the Water seem cold to one Hand, and warm to the other?

Hyl. It will.

Phil. Ought we not therefore by your Principles to conclude, it is really both cold and warm at the same time, that is, according to your own Concession, to believe an Absurdity.

Hyl. I confess it seems so.

Phil. Consequently, the Principles themselves are false, since you have granted that no true Principle leads to an Absurdity.

Hyl. But after all, can any thing be more absurd than to say, there is no Heat in the Fire?

The heat of a deadline may cause us to squirm but it's our response that matters most. There's nothing absurd about feeling some discomfort along the way; after all, AU is higher education and not just a recess from the real world. If learning was easy we'd already think we knew everything; our exposure to the light of knowledge can only be with some occasional, and relatively minor, discomforts.

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*Jason Hazel-rah Sullivan is a Masters of Integrated Studies student who loves engaging in discourse while working in the sunny orchards and forests of the Okanagan.*

## In Conversation With Mia LJ

**Wanda Waterman**



*Mia LJ is a young alt-R&B artist and producer, known for her multi-instrumentalist talents, her skill as a producer and audio engineer, and her precociously sudden rise to music career success.*

*Exercising total creative control of her own works, the self-taught artist Mia also shares her gifts via projects with other artists. She recently collaborated with rapper ArchrFox to create the video "Human x Love Bomb," a gorgeous, mesmerising meditation on a love gone wrong.*

*Having released her independent debut EP, These Are the Years, at the tender age of*

*14, this summer the now 19-year-old Mia plans to release her album THIS LIVIN. Recently she was nice enough to answer our questions about her childhood, her collaborations, and her thoughts on music itself.*

### What kind of childhood did you have?

I had an amazing childhood growing up in the Orange County region of New York. I played every sport there is, quite passionately, until I decided to focus that energy on music. I lived near a beautiful private lake which I still visit on a daily basis. My town is so peaceful, so perfect. Growth is never easy, especially in the early phases. I went through my share of lessons, as we all do. I'm grateful for every single occurrence, especially those of my childhood.

### What role did music play in it?

I've been playing music since the age of five years old. Music is my life.

**Was it hard to learn six instruments and sound engineering?**

It's only as hard as you make it on yourself. Such is life, haha.

**Is New York a creatively stimulating city for for you?**

Of course! New York is such a mixing pot, from culture to sound design. Inspiration is everywhere. There's always something going on. There's always a chance to meet new people. This city is my home, and it's helped me grow in so many ways. The weather is really bipolar and traffic is wondrous, but other than that . . . I love it, haha.

**Who—or what—was the best influence on you as an artist? As a human being?**

Past, present, and future. Not just mine. Really anyone I've ever crossed paths with or studied, from business legends to innovators to artists.

**You appear to have sidestepped the tyranny of the male agenda in your career, a thing many before you have struggled for yet failed to achieve. What do you think made it possible for you to maintain your autonomy in an industry that is so sexist and exploitive?**

Honestly, I deal with it just as much as any other female in the industry. I have experienced everything from sexual pursuits to straight up disrespect and intimidation attempts in professional situations. I've learned to not allow that to phase me. I simply focus on taking action with the right intention and maintaining self-control.

**Has anything funny or weird happened to you during recording sessions or while you've been on tour or performing?**

Ah yes, of course, haha, every session and show consists of infinite horrid humor from yours truly, producers, and live band members. It's hilarious—always good vibes!

**How is recording going for *This Livin*?**

It's going great. I've wrapped audio production at this point. Just working on branding and visual production. Everything looks, sounds, and feels like a movie. I'm stoked to drop the record this year!

**What's the story behind the song "Human x Love Bomb"?**

Quote via ArchrFox: "Human x Love Bomb is essentially a push & pull of emotions between two people. It's just the intro to a complex theme within my love life and this part deals with a very important ex. I want her to accept me for my flaws while I bare my true feelings and apologize for the mistakes I made in our relationship. It's an intentionally dramatic vibe teasing the more dynamic projects that are to come."

**Who initiated the collaboration with ArchrFox?**

ArchrFox actually reached out to me via Instagram after coming across "Ambiguous" and "This Livin."

**Do you find that collaborating with other artists comes naturally to you?**

It's all about the vibe, but I normally have no trouble with composing or producing something everyone is proud of and loves.



**How do you regenerate after giving yourself heavily to the music?**

Listen to frequency based sounds. Rest my ears. Sleep.

**What conditions do you need in your life in order to maintain creativity?**

Good vibes. Really, it's all about feeling for me. The quality of environment and energy of those I'm surrounded by affects my creative state heavily.

**Are there any musical acts that have influenced your creative work?**

Now, Now, Threads. Coldplay, Paramore, Jimi Hendrix, Lenny Kravitz, Demi Lovato, Metro Boomin.

**What does the word "music" mean to you?**

Life.

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

Better.

**What's next?**

More and better. Tour! Debut album release. Loads of visuals. Love. Dreams transforming into reality.

**Do you have anything to add?**

I LOVE YOU.



**Brittany Daigle**

**Course Exam**

*AU courses, up close*

**Course Exam**

**Brittany Daigle**

**COMP 314—Operating Systems**

COMP 314 (Operating Systems) is a three-credit computing and information systems course that teaches students “the fundamental concepts, principles, and structures of operating systems.” COMP 314 has a prerequisite. Students should have completed COMP 206 (Introduction to Computer Programming in C++), COMP 268 (Introduction to Computer Programming in Java), or an equivalent university level programming course as a prerequisite. Prior to enrolling students should be familiar with the basic structure and hardware of a computer.

Operating Systems is comprised of five units, four assignments, and one final exam. The five units within this course cover topics such as basic machine components (CPU, RAM, storage), process management (processes, threads, CPU scheduling, deadlocks), storage management (main memory, virtual memory, file-system interface and implementation, mass-storage structure, input / output systems), protection, security, and virtual machines. Students should

note that there are no programming questions within this course; it is entirely a writing course (tons of writing).

The first assignment, weighing ten percent, covers unit one and is split up into two parts. Part one has students answering twelve questions and each question should be about one hundred and fifty words. Part two of this assignment has students answering three questions that are one to two pages in length each. The second assignment, weighing ten percent, covers unit two and has students answering sixteen questions at one hundred and fifty words each. The third assignment, weighing ten percent, covers unit three and has students answering thirteen questions at one hundred and fifty words each. The fourth and last assignment, weighing fifteen percent, covers units one through five and is also split up into two parts. Part one has students answering five questions at one hundred and fifty words each and part two has students writing a ten to fifteen-page research project (which should be written in either conference paper format or journal format). The final exam is worth fifty-five percent and covers the topics discussed in the five units.

Dr. Mahmoud Abaza, the course coordinator and tutor for COMP 314, has been with Athabasca University for eighteen years. During these eighteen years he has tutored and/or coordinated COMP 314 (Operating Systems), COMP 315 (Closed), COMP 318 (Introduction to Game Design and Development), COMP 374 (Closed), and COMP 503 (Information Technology Hardware and Software).

Dr. Mahmoud Abaza recommends this course to “any student who had a basic knowledge on computers as well as a one high-level programming language.”

Abaza states, “This is a standard course on operating systems. We follow a course plan like any other university and that is why this course is transferred to most universities. Our main resource is the textbook: *Operating System Concepts* by A. Silberwchatz and P. Calvin. There are three assignments and a final exam. The final exam covers most of the material in the textbook.”

He continues, “Students should solve all exercises that appear in the textbook while you are reading the text. If you happen to know another person who is taking the course, whether on the forum or otherwise, it is good to discuss material with.”

Last, he states “The main benefit of COMP 314 is to learn the structure of computers as well as the internals of operating systems.”

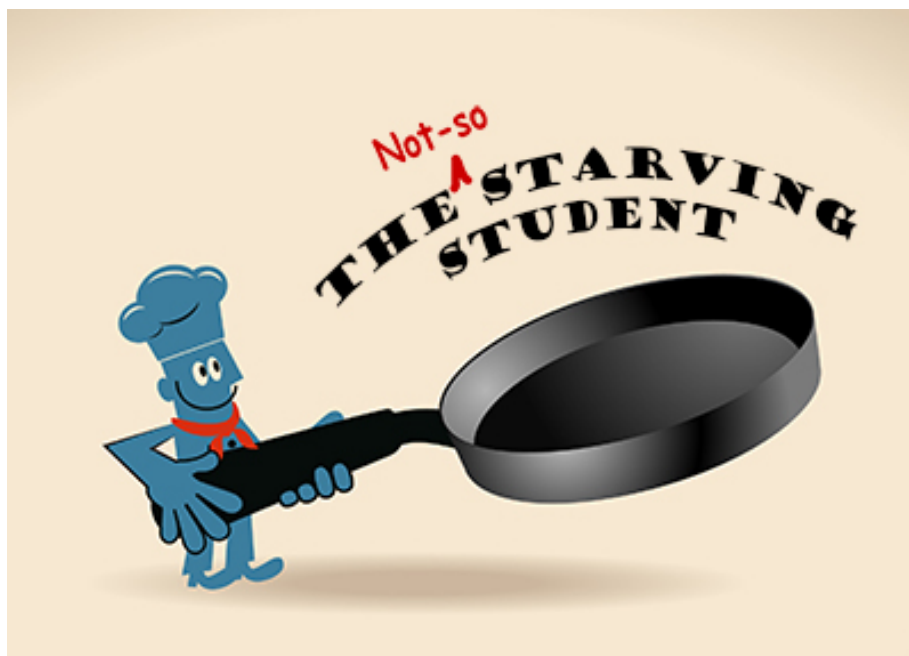
From personally being enrolled in this course (unfortunately it is a core degree requirement), I can tell you that it is a lot of work. The first three assignments are very lengthy and time consuming, and that is not even considering the final assignment that has a ten to fifteen-page research paper! To reiterate, this course has no programming component; it is a writing course. It requires you to explain, compare, illustrate, and define key terms discussed in the textbook and paraphrase those key terms into one hundred and fifty-word paragraphs. Some of the terms in the textbook did not even provide enough detail to write one hundred and fifty words so I had to rely on Google to answer some of the questions. This course has more writing than some of the English courses that I have taken. I also found it a bit strange that all this work does not even equal to fifty percent of your final grade (the final exam is worth fifty-five percent). Ultimately, this is not a course that you want to procrastinate on and not a course that I would recommend unless it's required by your degree or the topics that are discussed are something that you are extremely interested in.

*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 Tribute to Pies

Xin Xu



For most, March 14th doesn't ring any bells in terms of holidays. However, for myself and some (nerdy) others, we might recall this day to be Pi Day. A day where we celebrate the mathematical constant  $\pi$  or 3.14 rounded to the nearest two digits. In reality, this irrational number goes on forever. In my childhood, my school held competitions for students remembering the most digits of pi, pie sampling, and even fundraising by giving our math teacher the classic pie in the face. Regardless of whether you're a math whizz or not, there's lots to love about this holiday. Particularly, its plentiful

of pies. To celebrate this quirky holiday, we have a handful of DIY non-bake pies that are perfect for any occasion.

### White Chocolate Velvet Pie

#### Ingredients

- 1 Ready Made Oreo Crust
- 1.5 cups white chocolate chips
- 8 ounces cream cheese, room temperature
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1 cup heavy whipping cream

#### Instructions

In a microwave safe dish, place white chocolate chips. Heat on high in microwave for 1 minute. Remove from microwave and stir until chips are completely melted, heating an additional 15 seconds if needed. Let cool to room temperature.

In a large bowl, beat whipping cream with hand mixer on medium speed until peaks form and hold shape, being careful not to over beat. Set aside.

Combine melted white chocolate chips, cream cheese and vanilla extract until smooth. Fold in whipped cream. Once fully incorporated, spoon mixture into Oreo crust.

Refrigerate 2-3 hours before serving.





## Cold Brew Coffee Pie

### Ingredients

1 (3.4 oz) box INSTANT vanilla pudding mix  
¾ cup cold brew coffee (any brand is fine; I used sweetened cold brew coffee but unsweetened will work)  
½ cup milk or cream  
1 Tbsp pure coffee extract (or less if you want a less strong coffee flavor)  
1 (8 oz) tub Cool Whip, thawed  
1 prepared Oreo cookie crust  
Whipped cream, for garnish  
Dark chocolate-covered espresso beans, for garnish



### Instructions

In a large bowl, whisk together the instant pudding dry mix, the cold brew coffee, the milk and the coffee extract. Whisk until combined and slightly thickened, about 1 minute. Fold in the Cool Whip completely, making sure to get the bottom! Pour the mixture into the prepared pie crust and smooth out the top. Freeze for at least 6 hours, or overnight. Just before serving, pipe on whipped cream and garnish with dark chocolate-covered espresso beans. Cut into wedges and serve!

## Orange Creamsicle Pie

### Ingredients:

1 Box Orange Jello (4 serving size)  
8 oz tub whipped topping such as Cool Whip, divided  
2 teaspoons orange extract  
zest of one orange (optional)  
2/3 cup Boiling water  
1/2 cup ice  
1 store bought (or homemade) graham cracker crust  
Canned or Jarred Mandarin Oranges for garnish (optional)

### Instructions:

In bowl, combine Jell-o powder with 2/3 cup boiling water. Stir until powder is completely dissolved. Place 1/2 cup ice into a 1-cup measuring cup and top to 1 cup with cold water. Add to the Jell-o mixture and stir until ice is almost melted. Discard ice. In a large bowl, fold together Jello mixture, orange extract, orange zest if using and 2/3 of the tub of Cool Whip (reserve the remaining 1/3 for topping). Pour the mixture into the pie crust and refrigerate 4 hours or overnight. Decorate with remaining cool whip and mandarin oranges if desired.



## 50 Ways to Leave your Lover

**Tara Panrucker**



Concluding you need to end a romantic relationship is never an easy decision. No matter how long you've invested in the partnership, it's hard to let someone down easy. However, there may come a day when it becomes glaringly obvious it must be done. For example, when your boyfriend knows a little too much about how to use drug paraphernalia or prefers to use the bathroom facilities with the door wide open. This was not the kind of sharing you had in mind when you began dating. Or your girlfriend likes to use the word 'like' a little too frequently. Like, at the beginning of every sentence. Fear not,

there is no shortage of inspired approaches to saying "Sayonara!" to your current relationship.

Fortunately, we all have easy access to our handheld devices that make leaving someone as simple as sending a short, concise text, such as "It's not me, it's you." If you enjoy creative writing, you can pen an expositive, enlightening email about how you don't appreciate her staring at her reflection for ten hours a day, or how his penchant for telling dirty, misogynistic, racist jokes is not in line with your value system. This way of breaking up is appealingly convenient for the more cowardly among us—those who deeply dislike confrontation of any kind. If you tend to change your mind and become too nice when someone begins crying openly in front of you, this technique works like a charm!

Another fun way of separating from someone is to generate the under-rated public scene. Inexplicably throwing a nice fizzy pop in your soon-to-be-ex's face for no apparent reason at the local food fare is sure to cause him or her to think twice about sticking around. Alternatively, confronting them (loudly) in the hallway at school about the lies he or she has been spreading on social media about your recent crazy behavior is sure to bring you closer to your goal of singlehood.

The final technique is where you truly put your imaginative and creative skills to work. Oh, what fun! This involves doing something so heinous that your next ex will never want to be seen with you in public, ever again. One idea is to take up smoking, drinking, and eating everything garlic until you smell so vile they cannot bear to be in the same vicinity as you any longer. Beware of the consequences and repercussions of this one—you may lose a few friends in the process who can no longer stand to be near you either. But, sometimes sacrifices must be made for the higher good. A further cool idea is to return the favour of 'the sharer' and leave the bathroom door open while you use the facilities. This one is particularly effective when you also have the flu. Who knew your ex could leave so quickly and efficiently?

Indeed, breaking up is hard to do, but life must go on. As Paul Simon's classic goes, there are more than 50 ways to leave your lover. When you put on your creative cap, there must be hundreds. Make a vivid memory; make a statement. What a wonderful story to tell your future grandchildren. Say "See you later, Alligator." But don't mean it.

*Tara Panrucker is currently enrolled in an AU online English course to help hone her writing skills and eventually achieve a General Arts Degree. She is a freelance writer and avid enjoyer of the outdoors, currently residing on Vancouver Island.*



## The Fit Student

### The Perfect Date

Marie Well



Love. Gym B.O. Superfoods. What do these three have in common? The perfect date.

Eight months ago, I never exercised. I barely managed a block walk while dragging my sore knee. Most days, I felt dead-tired and nauseated. Me—the perfect date from the Rocky Horror Picture Show.

Now, after eight months of exercise, I'm turning down a job as a personal fitness trainer. And in a couple of years, I'll turn fifty, but look better than my late-thirties. Better than my mid-twenties.

You, too, may look ten-to-twenty years younger. How? Buy a gym membership and train six days a week, an hour each day. The gym will strengthen your bones, tone your muscles, and shape you into a Ferrari. Plus, gyms glow your skin, eyes, and smile—brighter than a celebrity-makeup-artist's victim.

While you get fit and flirty, indulge in your trios-of-love. Yes, three things you crave. For fitness, my trio-of-love consists of weight lifting, cycling, and shadow boxing. Once you know your trio, fitness grows fun.

Also, find your trios-of-love with fruits, vegetables, lean proteins, and healthy fats. My trio-of-love for healthy fats includes natural almond butter, flax seed, and avocados. Swallow them daily.

You may shrug, thinking, *But I'm overweight and smoke. Who could love me?* Remember the authors of *Younger Next Year: Live Strong, Fit, and Sexy Until You're 80 and Beyond?* They cited a study that said (as far as I recall) *smokers* 40 pounds overweight who regularly exercise are functionally *healthier* than lean *nonsmokers* who don't exercise. So, you've got an edge.

And once you exercise, you're more likely to quit smoking, quit drinking, eat ten servings of fruits and vegetables, join sports teams, and get higher grades. Plus, you're more likely to find love. Our friend Dr. Amen suggests all this in his book *Change Your Brain, Change Your Body: Use Your Brain to Get and Keep the Body You Have Always Wanted.*

Best of all, when you exercise, you get others fit—mostly loved ones, says Dr. Amen. My boyfriend and I urge friends to hit the gym. One friend feared the gym, but she now dances and does circuits like a diehard. And she jokes about selling bikini calendars, starring her.

My hope? You, too, turn gym rat.

Arthur Agatston, MD, gives you the skinny, not with fitness, not with love, but with food in his book *The South Beach Diet Wake-Up Call: 7 Real-Life Strategies for Living Your Healthiest Life Ever.*

- Why eat superfoods? "Eating healthy ... could help [you] shed some pounds so that [you] can wear more fashionable clothes or eventually join a sports team or feel confident enough to ask someone on a date" (p. 176).
- How often should you eat? "Eat three meals and at least two snacks each day. This helps prevent the drop in blood sugar ... leading to fatigue and then cravings" (p. 177).



- And don't skip breakfast! "People who skip a morning meal tend to eat more poorly throughout the day ... They also exercise less ... have higher cholesterol, elevated insulin levels, and larger waist circumferences" (p. 178).
- Pack healthy snacks and stay clear of Starbucks. "The trick is to make sure you always have snacks at the ready—in your refrigerator at home and at work, in your desk drawer, and/or in your backpack and car" (p. 180). [Starbucks snacks throttle you with excess calories. And, no, white bread wraps don't pack great nutrition.]
- Trash the junk. "Foods to remove from your pantry, cupboards, and fridge ... [include] baked goods ... fruit juices, sodas, and alcohol ... cornflakes, cream of wheat, and instant oatmeal ... condiments, dressings, and seasonings ... [most] dairy and cheese ... canned fruits in syrup, sugared fruit jams and jellies ... all pasta made from refined grain ... sweeteners" (p. 173).
- Eat mostly fruits and vegetables. "The USDA says to fill at least half of your plate with fruits and vegetables and the other half with grains (ideally whole grains) and proteins (lean please). ... [D]rink low-fat dairy and cut down on processed foods ..." (p. 177).
- Lastly, buy a gardener's book on growing superfoods. "Plant an edible garden" (p. 175). [And savor fresh kale picked from windowsill gardens.]

I prod a former colleague (whom I love) to get fit. She's a chief scientist at a pharmaceutical company. Long ago, she ate avocados after workouts, her face aglow. But she since stopped training. So, I remind her of that post-workout glow. To my delight, last week, she returned to the gym. She'll live longer, healthier, and prettier, and—*no sweat*—find romantic love.

Even Dr. Amen attests that love comes easier doused with gym sweat. Why? Health nuts make perfect dates.

## Canadian Science News

Scott Jacobsen



### Sober Second Thoughts on Prescribed Cannabis

According to *Science Daily*, a brand new medical guideline is making the suggestion that family physicians should reconsider the prescription of "medical cannabis to most patients." The guideline is a simplified version published in *Canadian Family Physician*.

The Project Lead for the Guideline and the Director of Evidence-Based Medicine at the University of Alberta, Mike Allan, said, "While enthusiasm for medical marijuana is very strong among some people, good-quality

research has not caught up."

Poor research was done before, in general. Now, the guideline was created with an in-depth review of the clinical trials. There were 10 members in the committee in addition to 10 other contributors, and peer review by another 40 with "a mixture of doctors, pharmacists, nurse practitioners, nurses and patients."



Allan noted that the medical cannabinoids should be used in a handful of conditions with sufficient evidence after other therapies have been tried for the patient. The guideline will be distributed to 30,000 physicians.

### **A Nasty Year for Influenza in Alberta**

*660 News* says that it has been a bad year for influenza in Alberta with updated numbers coming out of Alberta Health Services. Dr. Judy MacDonald have stated that 65 Albertans died from “lab-confirmed influenza.”

There was one fewer last year at 64. Calgary has been the most impacted this year. The majority of confirmed deaths from influenza have been there. There have been 3,000 cases of confirmed-by-labs of influenza A and B.

The most prominent strain this year has been AH3. “There can be differences in those viruses from one year to the next,” said MacDonald. “So when you’re comparing the damage that they do, it’s really difficult to say it’s exactly the same virus.”

Dr. MacDonald “urges” Albertans to get their seasonal flu shot, which are “still available at AHS public health clinics, some pharmacies and some doctors.”

### **Plans for Big Animal Farming Operation at Hutterite Colony**

“It’s going to have a huge impact to our citizens, we’re downwind and various studies show the pollutants, the hydrogen sulphide from [confined feeding operations] have harmful effects in human beings,” Carmangay Mayor Stacey Hoyde said to *CBC News*.

Hoyde was referencing the small village near Vulcan, Alberta that is making an appeal to the NRCB or the Natural Resources Conservation Board (NRCB). The appeal is to stop the big animal farming operation planned for a local Hutterite colony.

The plan was submitted by Summerland colony and “would involve more than a dozen new barns and manure storage areas, located six kilometres away from Carmangay.” The entire operation could incorporate as many as 130,000 chickens, 140 dairy cows, 1,300 ducks, 200 geese, and 550 pigs.

The NRCB approved of the initiative in January, but “the village falls outside the required minimum distance for it to be considered directly impacted.”

### **Ankylosaurs: Stranger than Fiction**

Ankylosaurs are a fat and squat dinosaur, according to *Science Magazine*, and have backs that are armored. They even come with a club for a tail, basically. Many of the fossilized remains of the creatures are found upside-down. Why?

It has remained a mystery for numerous decades, since the 1930s. But with the help of paleontologists and armadillo experts, the answer may lie in “bloated, floating dinosaur carcasses.” Interestingly, many theories have been given from the relevant empirical data with zero proved true so far.

Jordan Mallon, a dinosaur paleontologist associated with the Canadian Museum of Nature in Ottawa, tested each hypothesis or theory. What did he find about the armored, up-side down dinosaurs? First theory, they fall down hills and land on their backs: discounted theory.

Second theory, predators flip them on their backs, so they can get to their tasty bellies: disproven. Third theory, the bodies swell with gases as they decompose and then this tips them over onto their backs: no evidence.

Fourth theory, it gained some traction. It was called the “bloat-and-float” model. The carcasses got bloated and washed into the sea, where they became super unstable and bloated and then tipped over: proven. The “bloat-and-float” model came out the winner.

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



## The Creative Spark! Unfriendly Potatoes

Marie Well



Does When life slaps you to the floor, grin. Yes, comedians say, “Your worst memories bring big laughs—like it or not.”

Jim Carrey faced claims that he gave his ex-girlfriend an STD. He went into hiding, resurfacing with a shaggy beard. On a talk show, he joked “The question is not, ‘Why are you growing a beard?’ The question is, ‘Why am I growing a beard and still shaving my balls?’” He squirmed while the audience howled.

Worse, first day of class, my prof mocked a student, “I remember you! You didn’t really crap your pants, did you?” The class laughed. But the student’s seat sat empty next day. But that student should’ve stayed—with a cheeky, defiant grin.

Why? We’ve all had bad bathroom tales.

In grade one gym class, my classmates and I waved like trees to the commands of Mrs. Brown. I’d pipe up in a whisper, “Mrs. Brown?”—each time silenced. That is, until she saw the puddle. Worse, the boy I liked offered to clean my mess. Shyly, I shuffled home, broken-hearted, and bawled to Mom.

If that wasn’t bad enough, a boss threatened to fire me. Not for poor performance, but for using the can when the plumbing went amuck. But what options did I have? Messing my pants. Fertilizing her petunias. Or squatting on the lawn—like Jim Carrey in *Me, Myself, and Irene*.

So, lighten up and laugh off horrors. Brad Schreiber shows how in his book *What Are You Laughing At? How to Write Humor for Screenplays, Stories, and More*:

- Laugh at your own red face: “Embarrassment is a principle that ... readily connects to your own painful, shameful, humiliating, excruciating, moronic, pathetic remembrances .... If most people can find ... a level of tension in an embarrassing moment, it has a good chance of amusing” (p. 10).
- No matter how bad your tale, joke about it: “Don’t tell me nothing bad has ever happened to you. And don’t tell me it’s too awful to repeat” (p. 10).

- Why tell the worst? Shudder-worthy moments entertain more than success: “When public school students come back to classes in the Fall, they have sometimes been given the essay assignment ‘What I Did During My Summer Vacation.’ Of course, in order to foster more verve ... the assignment should be ‘What Went Wrong During My Summer Vacation’” (p. 69).
- Shock makes us laugh, too: Shock or surprise is the undergarment that holds in the unsightly flab of humor writing. Remove it at your own risk” (p. 6).
- Exaggeration tickles more than meekness: “Exaggeration at its most basic goes back to the idea of avoiding meek choices .... In fiction and nonfiction, you have every right to stretch things out of proportion, especially using metaphors” (p. 8).
- Pile it on—boldly! “Meekness is the ... kidney stone to be passed out of the body comedic. Writers often get mildly amusing ideas and simply go with them, refusing to try to better them. For example, consider the difference between the two: ‘He’s pretty fun to be with—for a guy just out of a twelve-step program.’ ‘He’s pretty fun to be with—for a guy just out of a twelve-step program for recovering mimes” (p. 5).

Want comedic revenge on your prof or boss? Think Jim Carrey and his unfriendly lawn-potatoes.



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

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

### **AthaU Facebook Group**



Kari shares her experience of forgetting to hit the final "submit" key on her assignment, but fortunately realized before the course end date. Traky seeks feedback on using ProctorU in China; several students report good experiences. Amanda relates having to explain her sleeping dog to ProctorU, sparking off a discussion of funny and weird ProctorU interactions.

Other posts include exam interruptions, and courses FNCE 370, GOVN 301 and HADM 339.

### **Twitter**

@AthabascaU tweets: "Deadline to apply for the #AthabascaU Access to Students with Disabilities Education Bursary is March 15! The award is awarded to an undergraduate or graduate program student with an identified learning, physical, or psychiatric disability. <http://ow.ly/wwUy30iIMr7>."

@AthabascaUSU (AUSU) tweets: "Graduating soon? Show off your pride and get an @AthabascaU Parchment Frame! <http://bit.ly/2k0vZBF> #AthaU."

### **Youtube**

Contemplating an Executive MBA? Check out MJ Bulmer's interview with the National Post about her AU experience.

## Letting Go

Deanna Roney



It can be hard to acknowledge to yourself, let alone anyone else, that you have taken on too much. That the workload you thought you could handle was dragging you down and making you less productive across the board. But it is important to see that. To acknowledge the exhaustion, the forgetfulness, the lack of motivation. These are all signs that something has to give.

But, how do you decide what to let go of, when it all feels important. The best thing to do is write out your goal, what is it you are working toward? Then write out all the things you have

undertaken, your job, school, extracurricular, family responsibilities, etc. Once everything is down on paper organize those commitments into categories, the ones you can't step away from, the ones that have more flexibility. When you figure out what you absolutely need, then look at the ones you have left, where can you let something go, something significant enough alone to free up some time (stress) or a few things that when added together will release enough tension.

The answer isn't always clear, even at this point. But consider each of those things in terms of your goal. How are these going to contribute to you getting there? Don't be afraid to reach out for help when it comes to this part, to family, to friends, professionals. Ask the hard questions, explain where you are and work through the issue together.

One of the best things to do is to reach out to industry professionals, regardless of what industry it is. If you want to be a writer, a journalist, if you want to get on with a specific company, find someone that is willing to talk with you and lay it out there. Say, this is my end game, this is what I am trying to do to get there, are these activities going to help me achieve my goal? Which of these are the most important to making progress? It is important to understand that not everyone will have an answer, maybe no one can have a definitive answer, but they will be able to shed light on what you are trying to accomplish. They can guide you and mentor you forward. Gather as much information you can and then make an informed decision. Let go of something. The more you can direct your focus the more information you will be able to gather, learn, and grow.

Letting go of something doesn't mean you have to let go of it forever. It just means that for right now, this isn't the best course for you to be taking, right now you need to focus on something else. There may be a time when you come back to what you let go of, and when you do you'll know the timing is right because you will be excited about it, able to focus on it, and most important you'll be able to enjoy the process.

After letting go, there is an incredible feeling of freedom, a weight that's been lifted, maybe a hint of remorse, but overall a sense of relief.

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







Dear  
Barb

Barbara Godin

## Home is Where the Heart Is

Dear Barb:

*I was out with some friends recently and we were confronted by a homeless man asking for money. My first reaction was to search for some change in my purse but my friend's husband had a totally different reaction. He told the man, rather aggressively, "Go get a job and work like the rest of us." The man didn't react, he just turned away. He was clearly not well, and struggling. His clothes were torn and dirty and he was in need of a shave and a shower. My friend then asked why I would give someone like that money. Saying I was just contributing to the homeless problem and that as long as people keep giving them money, they will never go to work. I am not a confrontational person but I couldn't let this go. I told him I did not believe someone would actually choose to live like that unless they were suffering from a mental illness or other serious condition. My friend said I was just sticking my head in the sand and choosing not to see the reality that some people just don't want to work. The rest of the evening was tense, to say the least and we haven't gotten together since. Maybe I should have said nothing and at least we would still be friends. I'm just not sure what would have been the best reaction*

*in that situation. Do you have any suggestions? Thanks, Tina.*

Hi Tina:

Homelessness is an important issue in our society and there are many causes for it. Being poor is the strongest precipitator for becoming homeless. If a person is living pay cheque to pay cheque and something happens where they become ill and are not able to work for a while, or get laid off from their job, they could end up homeless. Also, mental illness and substance abuse are strong predictors for homelessness. Prior to the 1960s those suffering from mental illness were kept in hospitals and institutions where their medication was monitored and they were cared for. A movement to deinstitutionalize these individuals caused many of them to become homeless. Often these people stop taking their medication and are not able to manage their lives, or get taken advantage of by others. As a result, they begin begging on the streets. Undoubtedly there are people who are perfectly capable of working but choose this lifestyle, but they are the exception. I agree with you that most people would not choose this lifestyle. I commend you for not judging these people and putting them into a category that you really are not sure they fit into. You followed your heart and that can never lead you in the wrong direction. If your friend or her husband don't want to have a relationship with you because you see the world differently than them, do you really want to have them as friends? Thanks for writing Tina.

Follow Barb on twitter @BarbGodin

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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## Changes to AU Course Materials

In the fall of 2013 AU began the process of replacing hard-copy textbooks for all undergraduate courses with e-text versions. Implementation has been staged in

The results will be shared with members in an upcoming newsletter.

## A New Era at AU - A New AU president

After two terms in the Office of President, Dr. Frits Pannekoek is retiring. Last week, in recognition of his contributions to distance education, the University of South Africa (Unisa) granted him an honorary Doctor of Literature and Philosophy award. AUSU congratulates Dr. Pannekoek on this great honour, and the recognition it brings to AU as a world leader in distance and open learning. We wish him all the best over his final weeks in the role of president, and in all his future endeavours!



We had hoped by now to be able to announce the selection of the presidential search committee for a new, full-term president; however, as a suitable candidate has not yet been found, AU has instead appointed an interim president: Dr. Peter MacKinnon, formerly of the University of Saskatchewan. Dr. MacKinnon has also served as chair of the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada (AUCC) and on the Science, Technology and Innovation Council of Canada. We look forward to working with him over the coming year! **Convocation travel information**

AUSU wants to make sure this year's graduating class has a fantastic convocation. To make this happen, we're providing free transportation via bus or limo service to take people from Edmonton to the Athabasca Multiplex each day of convocation 2014. This applies to those graduating from AU undergraduate programs, and their guests (some limits may apply).

We've also arranged hotel discounts in Edmonton.



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## IMPORTANT DATES

- **Mar 10:** [Deadline to register in a course starting Apr 1](#)
- **Mar 13:** [March Council Meeting](#)
- **Mar 15:** [Deadline to submit election appeal](#)
- **Mar 15:** [April degree requirements deadline](#)
- **Mar 30:** [Deadline to apply for course extension for Mar](#)
- **Apr 10:** [Deadline to register in a course starting May 1](#)
- **Apr 10:** [Council Changeover Meeting](#)

## Welcome New AUSU Councillors!

The votes are in from the 2018 AUSU General Election! Thank you to everyone who voted - we had over 2000 votes in total!

The newly elected councillors are as follows:

- [Sarah Blayney Lew](#) (Kingston, ON)
- [Brittany T.M. Daigle](#) (Toronto, ON)
- [Natasha Donahue](#) (Barrhead, AB)
- [Darcie Fleming](#) (Lethbridge, AB)
- [Melinda Goertz](#) (Athabasca, AB)
- [Christine Hudder](#) (Palmer Rapids, ON)
- [Amanda Lipinski](#) (Prince George, BC)
- [Alice Namu](#) (Toronto, ON)
- [Lisa Oracheski](#) (Edmonton, AB)
- [Joshua Ryan](#) (Orleans, ON)
- [Brandon Simmons](#) (Duffield, AB)
- [Mark Teeninga](#) (Stoney Creek, ON)
- [Julian Teterenko](#) (Edmonton, AB)

You can access the complete vote tally on our website [here](#), or you can view the certified results from the Simply Voting system through your confidential ballot.

## Questions or Appeals

The appeals period runs from **March 8 to March 15, 2018**. Contact the Chief Returning Officer, Jacqueline Keena, at [cro@ausu.org](mailto:cro@ausu.org) with any questions.

## Pharmacy Savings

AUSU has teamed up with Alliance Pharmacy to offer our members some great pharmacy savings and perks!

### The promotion includes:

- Free, next-business-day delivery to the location of your choice, anywhere in Canada through Direct2U Prescriptions.
- Lower drug costs and dispensing fees on your prescription and over the counter needs with preferred pharmacy pricing.
- Refill reminders by phone, text message & email.
- 10% off purchases at the Alliance Pharmacy online store – just use the promo code “AUSU” during checkout.

Find out more about this great promotion on our website [here](#).

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Pharmacy



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

Contact *The Voice* at [voice@voicemagazine.org](mailto:voice@voicemagazine.org).

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ISSN 2561-3634