



THE VOICE

Vol 26 Issue 10 2018-03-16

An Interview with Angie Abdou
On the Writing Process

Why Isn't there an App for That?
Apps that AU Students Need!

Music Review
Emily Rockarts

Plus:
Motivation
The Not-So Starving Student
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

The Problem with Faking It

Karl Low



This week, our feature article is an interview with AU's Dr. Angie Abdou, an associate professor in creative writing and novelist. We've spoken with Dr. Abdou before in our Meeting the Minds series but this time, instead of looking at her teaching philosophies we talk to her about her process for writing and her thoughts on how social media is affecting the craft of writing. If you're interested in pursuing creative writing at all, this is definitely an interview you'll want to read. (If only to marvel that her first work was only rejected 10 times.)

Dr. Abdou has particular experience with this as you may remember from my editorial of a few weeks ago. And in some ways this ties back in with my comments of last week, simply in how we now exist in an era where large numbers of people can organize into a movement in a matter of hours based on a hashtag and sometimes little else. People can isolate themselves from facts by surrounding themselves with like-minded people who all believe the same falsehoods.

Before the internet, this kind of gathering was difficult, as simply finding another person willing to believe your particular brand of crazy became more difficult the further away from the status quo your crazy sits at. This also works the other way, of course, as it's incredibly difficult to keep lies hidden when there is an around the clock network looking for inconsistencies in anything. Which brings me to what's been on my mind lately. The intersection of technology and falsehood.

We all know about fake news, and most of us probably think we're able to spot it. Unfortunately, that's going to get much more difficult as technology improves. You've perhaps heard of a technology called "deepfakes". This essentially allows one person's face to be made to mimic another person's facial expressions on video. But it's not just your expressions on their face, it captures and emulates your expressions as they would do them. So you can make Justin Trudeau or Donald Trump say anything you like, and it will look like it's them doing the speaking. The immediate response of most media agencies covering this is that this technology would lead to someone making a fake video that would take a country to war.

But that's not the real issue. There are enough checks in place that any such attempt is extremely likely to be caught out, especially when all it takes is a phone call by one government lackey to another to ask "Did he really do that?"

The far larger danger, however, is that it's going to make it impossible to hold anybody to account. Politicians are already crying fake news about media coverage they don't like, even if it's demonstrably true. But what if it wasn't. What if we couldn't tell, without extensive analysis, that the video of someone saying something really is them? Some politicians already are known for saying one thing to one group of people, and then saying the completely opposite thing to a different group where it serves to their advantage. Now though, we won't even be able to confront them with that. "That's manipulated video, the people who say it isn't are paid agitators, etc." When absolutely anything can be a lie, what can we really trust? I don't have any answers, but maybe you do. If not, at least I won't be the only one losing sleep over it now.

Enjoy the read!

An Interview with Angie Abdou

Carla Knipe



*For many people, writing a book and seeing their name in print is their ultimate dream. Athabasca University's creative writing professor, Angie Abdou, has taken her passion for writing and written several successful novels, including *The Bone Cage*, *The Canterbury Trail*, and her latest novel, *In Case I Go*. But does the life of a modern writer equal the dream that people have? I spoke to Angie for The Voice Magazine to find out.*

In previous interviews with The Voice Magazine, you've talked a lot about being a creative writing professor. But let's talk a bit about your life as a writer. Were you a writer first, or did a writing career start to happen after you established your academic career?

I remember the first time I knew I wanted to be a writer. It came right after I first fell in-love with a book: *One Fish Two Fish Red Fish Blue Fish* by Dr. Seuss. I read it at four years old and knew that I too wanted to do that magical thing. However, when I hit the teen-age years, self-consciousness and insecurity set in. I didn't follow that dream of being a writer. I ended up on a parallel path to what I most wanted. I did English degrees and studied other people's writing, wrote about other people's writing, and taught other people's writing. I did not attempt to write any fiction of my own. I nearly completed a Ph.D. in Medieval Studies at the University of Western Ontario. Then one-month before my 30th birthday (on April 9, 1999), I had a near-death experience: a head-on collision on highway 22 on my way from Calgary to Fernie. I woke up in the trauma ward with a broken back. I saw then the silliness of letting fear of failure stop me from pursuing the thing I most wanted. As soon as I got out of the hospital, I started buying books on how to write fiction and filling journals with the exercises. I published my first collection of short stories in 2006 and my first novel in 2007. I eventually went back and completed my Ph.D. but with a focus on Creative Writing at the University of Calgary, where I could write my second novel as a dissertation.

Was it difficult to get your first book published and break into the writing market? Once you had that "in" after your first book, was it easier for your subsequent books to get published?

Yes, my first book received the most rejections (nearly ten, I think) and my second received fewer (maybe four) and my third book received none. The decrease in rejections came partly as a result of familiarity with the market. As I got to know what publishing houses published what kinds of books, and as I began to know people in the industry, I had a better feeling for where to take each book. My most recent book (*Home Ice: Reflections of a Hockey Mom*, forthcoming September 2018 with ECW Press) received three offers. That was a first and was very exciting - and it only took me six books to get there! Yes, it does get easier to get published. Now I'm most excited when my students get their first book publication, more than for myself. I guess I've come to expect that if I write a book, someone will publish it (knock on wood).

There has been a big trend toward self-publishing. What is your perspective on that? Is that another way in to the publishing world, where writers have more control over their work and their career

(versus being at the mercy of the big publishing houses), or do you think self-publishing ultimately has a negative impact on a writer's career? How do you think the mainstream publishing industry is responding to self-publishing?

I'm old-fashioned on this front. I like traditional publishing. I like the gate-keepers. I like the team of trained professionals working to create the best book possible and then promote it in the most effective way. As a writer, I want to know that a publishing house believes my particular book to be worth the effort and that the manuscript made some kind of cut - that professionals are keen to put resources toward publishing my work. That investment on the part of a publishing house gives me confidence once the book is out in the world. As a reader, I also want that quality control. Of course, there are exceptions, but the self-published books I pick up don't tend to be as good as the ones traditionally published. To my mind, that's how the publishing industry responds: by continuing to put out great books.

Do you have a set writing routine, or does it vary?

I've learned to trust in my process. The main thing I need when I'm working on any project is consistency and momentum. When I'm mid-book, I need to write every day, and I need to carve out a substantial chunk of time (not thirty minutes here and thirty minutes there). Mornings work best. If I can get three hours in the morning, or even two, as long it's every day - that works. Then - here's the trick - after I put in my writing time, I need to go for a run. That's where the ideas come to me - when I'm running, not when I'm sitting at the computer. But I have to put in that computer time - to input the information into my subconscious, I guess. Then after the run, I scribble down whatever new lines came to me. Next day: repeat. Learning to trust in that process means that: I don't try to put in eight-hour days at the computer; I give myself breaks to go for those day-dreaming runs; and I make it a priority to find that chunk of writing time every day. On the bad days, I can remind myself: this process works, it's worked before, it's never not worked. That helps. The obvious question though: where to find three hours? That can be the trick! I have had months-long stretches when I've gotten up at 4am so I could write until the rest of the house wakes up at 7am. Those decades of early morning swim practices paid off: I know I can do it if I must.

AU students pride themselves on being master multitaskers. How do you find balance between being a writer, a professor, and maintaining a family life? Do you find it difficult to juggle everything?

Yes. I do find it difficult to juggle everything (smiles). I'm supposed to have more to say about that, but I'm drawing a blank. It's difficult, but each of the three has such special rewards, and I have a family and friends who gently remind me when the balance falls out of whack. It's a continual effort.

***In Case I Go* relied heavily on historical research. Is researching a book similar to academic research? What is your research process?**

For me, academic research and novel research are very different. For academic work, I do all the research up front, decide my argument, make an outline and start writing, methodically working my way through the outline step by numbered step. Creative work plays out in a much more chaotic fashion. The more I try to control the process, the less the novel comes to life. Novel outlines don't work for me. If I know where I'm going, I lose interest. Instead, I research as I find myself in scenes and realize I don't know what I need to know. When I'm writing a novel as opposed to an academic project, less of my research comes from books. If I can, I talk to people - interviews as research. For *In Case I Go*, a lot of the research came in after I'd completed the novel and had a draft accepted for publication. I made major changes as a result of consultation with the cultural liaison at the Ktunaxa Nation Council. I enjoyed the challenge of working out

that balance of maintaining my creative, imagined world while (hopefully) smoothly incorporating the historical suggestions and corrections that came out of that collaborative (research) process.

It seems that modern writers are required to do a lot of work promoting their books, such as conferences, signings, readings and interviews—which might be as much work as writing the book itself! Do you think that the promotion side of writing is necessary for writers? Do you find all of that draining or exhilarating?

I try to think of the promotion part as the reward for writing the book. I'm a social person so all those solitary hours of novel-writing don't come as naturally as I would like. I prefer the bookstore events, the library talks, the literary festivals - talking to readers and teachers and students and fellow writers. That's all very fun to me. The challenge is balancing the travel with family life, and each time I say I'm going to less on-the-road promotion but when the book comes out, I do more. I feel I owe it to the book. Readers have an overwhelming abundance of choice. It's my job to get a new book out there in readers' hands. I'm lucky I enjoy it.

How do you feel about the blogging world? Do you think that having an online presence--such as a blog--is necessary for writers and other creative people so that they can establish a presence and get their names and work recognized?

Is anybody reading blogs anymore? Does anyone even click on the links? We're so overwhelmed with online wordswordswords. As a reader, I would be happy to never again have a blog sent in my direction. I love getting off my computer with a good old-fashioned book. I recently read Dr. Cal Newport's *Deep Work*. He advocates for people spending less time online and getting off social media entirely. The idea is that what we value in society is deep, careful work (i.e. that which is original and labour-intensive rather than that which is common and quickly produced). Such "deep work," of course, is not what's being produced on Twitter, Facebook, blogs. In fact, to do deep work, we need to get away from the distraction of Social Media's easy output and immediate (but superficial) rewards. I like this idea: I'm going to imagine Newport is right. He makes sense to me. So my advice: don't worry about creating an online presence or maintaining a blog. Instead, take the time and do the deep work - create something unique and beautiful and profound. It'll find its readers.

AU-thentic Events Upcoming AU Related Events

2018 Internal 3MT Competition

Wed, March 21, 10:00 am MDT

Online

Hosted by AU Faculty of Graduate Studies

fgs.athabasca.ca/news/presentations/

e-mail fgs@athabasca.ca with your student number to register

more info on 3MT at:

fgs.athabasca.ca/news/events/3mt.php

Online MBA Info Session

Wed, March 21, 10:00 to 11:00 am MDT

Online

Hosted by AU Faculty of Business

[business.athabasca.ca/event-details/online-](https://business.athabasca.ca/event-details/online-mba-executives-information-session/)

[mba-executives-information-session/](https://business.athabasca.ca/event-details/online-mba-executives-information-session/)

Register online at above link

BComm/CPA Info Session

Thurs, March 22, 5:00 to 6:00 pm MDT

Online

Hosted by AU Faculty of Business

[business.athabasca.ca/event-details/bcomm-](https://business.athabasca.ca/event-details/bcomm-cpa-information-session-6/)

[cpa-information-session-6/](https://business.athabasca.ca/event-details/bcomm-cpa-information-session-6/)

Register online at above link

Fredericton Meet & Greet

Thurs, March 22, 5:30 to 7:00 pm ADT

The Snooty Fox, 66 Regent St, Fredericton
NB

In person

Hosted by AUSU

www.ausu.org/event/fredericton-meet-greet/

e-mail services@ausu.org to register

But it also appears to almost be a requirement for modern writers to have an active social media presence. Of course, recently, you have had a difficult time with social media. How has that experience situation changed your perspective on social media? How has it affected you as a person? What lessons about social media can others learn from what you went through?

There has been a lot of conflict and high emotion in the Canadian Literature community over the past two years. Recently, I made a mistake, and people called me out on it, loudly. Jon Ronson's *So You've Been Publically Shamed* is great on this relatively recent phenomenon. In the end, I decided to give myself a one-month timeout from social media and make apologies directly to injured parties. I'm still processing the experience, but I know I have lessons to learn from it. Things happen very quickly online. One lesson is to stop, think, and consider consequences. Less than a minute of bad-decision making can spiral completely out of control and do real harm. I've learned we should all behave on social media as if our actions will be reported in the national newspaper ... because they might be (in this case they were). I'm also a firm believer in taking conversations off Twitter. Face-to-face, real-life conversations allow for complexity and fallibility and forgiveness.

After *In Case I Go* was published last year, have you been so busy that you have found it difficult to come up with your next project?

I have had an unusually productive few years. *In Case I Go* came out in the fall. I also edited a collection of essays about Canadian Sport Literature, which is coming out this spring (*Writing the Body in Motion*, Athabasca University Press), and I wrote a creative nonfiction book about parenting and North America youth sport culture, which will be released September 2018 (*Home Ice: Reflections of a Reluctant Hockey Mom*, ECW Press). My wheels have started to turn on a new novel idea.



Scholarship of the Week

Digging up scholarship treasure for AU students.

Scholarship name: BeArt-Presets Academic Scholarship Program

Sponsored by: BeArt-Presets

Deadline: April 1, 2018, 11:59 pm EST

Potential payout: \$5000 USD

Eligibility restriction: Applicants must be an undergraduate, graduate, or high school senior student, and either enrolled or accepted at an accredited university or college.

What's required: An online application form, along with a maximum 700-word essay explaining how receiving this scholarship will impact your life.

Tips: Your application must include a link to your Facebook or LinkedIn profile.

Where to get info: www.beart-presets.com/beart-scholarship-program



Why Isn't There an App for That?

Solutions AU students are still waiting for

Barbara Lehtiniemi



Technology continues to develop at a pace that will make your smartphone spin. Any problem in need of a solution seems to have prompted another technological wonder, sometimes in the form of an app. Apps are great for both consumers and producers: they make life easier for consumers while ensuring you cannot do without the producer's creation.

Surprisingly, there are still areas where an app is desired but has not yet been designed. This is particularly evident at an online university. Sure, there are all the regular student apps, including the AUSU-sponsored

mobile app. But AU students are not "regular". We are unique. We work differently. There is no cookie-cutter solution that works for us.

AU students have unique needs unimagined by traditional techies. Consequently, our student lives are burdened with situations under the techie radar. Here are a few apps we'd like to see:

Obsessive Marks and Grades app (OMG app.) This app, custom designed with the AU student in mind, relieves the student of the tedium of checking for grades. Valuable student minutes and hours are wasted after every submitted assignment and exam checking for marks. AU students have been known to begin checking for grades within mere moments of submitting an assignment or exam—yes, you're not the only one! The OMG app does all the work of logging into the myAU portal at user-defined intervals of 30 seconds to 30 minutes. If newly-posted grades are detected, an onscreen alert appears on the student's mobile device, tablet, or laptop. Alerts can be accompanied by an optional music selection depending on the grade: from the glorious Hallelujah chorus of Händel's *Messiah* for an A+ (90-100%) right on down to the encouraging *Beautiful Loser* by Bob Seger for an F (0-49%).

Save Our Submission app (SOS app). How often have students begun to submit an assignment through Moodle but forgotten to click the Submit button? After clicking Add Submission, Upload, and then Save Changes, students often overlook the final click to Submit. The SOS app will identify assignments stalled before the Submit phase and send a progression of alerts. The first alert is triggered when the student logs out of myAU without clicking Submit on an assignment. A reminder alert is triggered 24 hours later. If the Submit button isn't clicked by the course end date, an elevated alert is sent to the student and the course tutor and, optionally, the student's mother or spouse.

Spam aLert app (SLAPP.) Never again will a student's email to a tutor languish—unnoticed, unread, and unanswered—in the tutor's spam folder. This app traces every email sent from AU student to AU tutor. If the app detects that an email has been directed to a tutor's spam or junk folder, or that an e-mail has been unread for more than 48 hours, an alert is sent back to the

student. An optional feature sends a pre-recorded message to the tutor's phone number with a gentle reminder to retrieve the important student message from the spam heap.

Social Media app—Retrieval Troll (SMART.) AU students consistently report that massive chunks of study time are lost to social media. Without a doubt most of that time is spent looking for valuable educational information on Facebook. This app searches the most popular social media sites, including Facebook, reddit, Twitter, The Landing, and many more, for user-defined search terms. Now students can receive alerts whenever, for example, a relevant course name or code is mentioned, or the term "easy course" or "no exam" appears in relation to an AU course on social media. No more fumbling around asking for tips: the tips come to you via an onscreen message and/or a daily email digest.

These apps will save the AU student time, money, and frustration. These apps recognize the unique quality of an AU education. These apps are what AU students—if they had been consulted—would have asked for.

Unfortunately, these apps still reside in the technological future. But surely it is only a matter of time before the super-smart and motivated scholars taking COMP courses offered at AU fill this technological void. The demand is great, so hopefully students won't have to wait for too many more spins of the smartphone for these essential apps.

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



Brittany Daigle

Course Exam

Course Exam

AU courses, up close

Brittany Daigle

COMP 200—Introduction to Computing and Information Systems

COMP 200 (Introduction to Computing and Information Systems) is a three-credit introductory computer science course that covers the fundamentals of information systems and serves as a prerequisite for the computing and information systems (CIS) programs. This course has no prerequisites, though students are required to have basic computer literacy and competence. If students are concerned about meeting the requirements for this course there is a COMP 200 Computer Literacy Quiz and a COMP 200 Math Readiness Quiz that will assess your preparedness.

Introduction to Computing and Information Systems is comprised of six units, six quizzes weighing two percent each, six assignments each weighing three percent, three projects worth ten percent each, a conference participation section weighing ten percent, and the final exam that is worth thirty percent. The six units within this course cover topics such as an introduction to computer science, algorithms, RAM, CPU, GPU, binary numbers, boolean logic, gates, system or network administration, database design or administration, programming, system software, virtual machines, artificial intelligence, compilers, and language translation.

The six quizzes within the course are extremely easy, open book, and all the questions are multiple-choice. The questions that are asked in the quizzes are worded almost exactly as those

from the textbook. Pro tip, have the e-text open while completing the quizzes and utilize the textbook's search tab. Search the exact words from the quizzes in the textbook and you are likely going to find the exact quiz sentence in the textbook!

As for the six assignments, they require students to complete different exercises within the textbook from the different chapters. Students have the liberty of choosing whichever exercises they want to do and there is a wide selection to choose from. The exercises range from two to four activities and are to be done in a word document. For instance, for assignment one students have to choose one exercise from each of chapters two and three, assignment two requires students to choose one exercise from each of chapters four and five, assignment three requires a choice of one each from chapters six, seven, and eight, and so on.

The three projects within this course require students to program in a language that is most comfortable for them (I chose python), design a database, and design database queries. These projects are a bit of a challenge if students have no prior programming experience, though they are a decent difficulty level for the course. They are also not considerably long programs to code, just somewhat tricky at times. This course is definitely designed to challenge students, though it also teaches a lot of the fundamentals of programming that will be applicable in more advanced courses, such as COMP 268 (Introduction to Computer Programming in Java) and COMP 272 (Data Structures and Algorithms).

For the conference participation, students are required to undertake the end of chapter questions and post them in their associated chapter discussion forum. These questions are extremely basic. For example, students are asked to share a website or YouTube video that taught them a concept or explained a concept more clearly for other students to utilize. Also, students must reply on other student's contributions in each of the chapter discussion forums as well. Be aware that if you want the entire ten percent then you must complete all the discussions for each chapter and you must reply to one person from each chapter's discussion forum.

The final exam is online and is all multiple-choice questions. It covers all the chapters within the textbook and includes some of the quiz questions. In my opinion, studying the quizzes is the best place to start. When studying, I compiled all the quiz questions and their possible multiple-choice answers into one-word document and spent hours a day memorizing them all. I did not even read the entire textbook and I found that I was well prepared for the final exam.

From personally taking COMP 200, this course can be challenging and can take some time to complete, though it is a good introduction to the study of computer science. Students will learn interesting theory and begin programming their first program. For some this may be their first programming opportunity, which can be scary and exciting at the same time. Just remember, if the textbook is not providing you the information you need, utilize the internet! Stack Overflow is a great tool for students to troubleshoot their programs or to answer any coding questions they may have; I would highly recommend it! Also, utilize your IDE (Integrated Development Environment)'s debugger! Some good IDE's are Netbeans, IntelliJ, and Notepad++ (they are all free). I would also recommend students to try and familiarize themselves with Java if the opportunity presents itself because the next computer science course that you will probably want to take is COMP 268 (Introduction to Computer Programming in Java). Ultimately, I would recommend this course to anyone in a computing and information systems program or anyone who has any interest in learning the fundamentals of computer science and programming!

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



The Creative Spark!

Snarly Puppets and Snoop Dog

Marie Well



What do snarly puppets, Snoop Dog, and I have in common? My older brother.

As a child, my brother directed a drama piece. All the kids on the block starred, including me. The bit part I played marked a highlight of my youth. Yet my brother stopped directing after managing our talentless crew. Deep down, I wished he would've directed us daily.

My brother also made paper puppets and a cardboard-box puppet stage. He'd gather me and my siblings and perform puppets. Fun? No! He teased me endlessly through vile puppets. I preferred to act his plays, not watch his barbs.

I later acted in junior high school plays, once landing the star female role. I played a drunken lass, coached by my brother, but forgot half my lines. My brother promised he'd sit in the audience,

applauding and blowing horns and whistles. But when I took my final curtsy, I faced a silent audience. My brother never showed. To this day, I wish he whistled, cheered, and hollered.

My brother went on to win best actor in his high school. He shuffled, shyly, to claim his award, the audience silent. His coming out as gay didn't bode well, especially with the jocks. I wanted to cheer for him, but I shyly clapped. To this day, I wish I whistled, cheered, and hollered.

As an adult, my brother had a comedy series approved by the National Film Board. Actors from *Star Trek* and Roseanne came on board. But the NFB muzzled my brother's jokes, so he fought legal battles until funds fell short.

David Allen tosses tidbits on the father of modern acting—Stanislavski—in his book *Stanislavski for Beginners* (illustrated by Jeff Fallow):

- Who's Stanislavski? "Stanislavski revolutionized our ideas about acting. His discoveries still form the basis of actor training in the Western theater" (p. 4).
- How should you act? Don't try so hard, says Stanislavski: "The harder he tried, the more the audience criticized him for overacting" (p. 5).
- Instead, act cool, reserved, not hyped: "He concluded that excitement was not enough—he must learn the value of restraint and control, what he called a 'feeling of true measure'" (p. 5).
- Stanislavski restrained his acting until his spirit burst, often during climaxes, like music crescendos: "It's strange: when you feel right—the impression on the audience is worse; when you control yourself and don't surrender completely to the role—it is better" (p. 19).
- Yes, restrain yourself, but act with feeling: "He was slowly learning to become an 'actor of feeling'" (p. 11).
- And don't waste time staring at your reflection: "Stanislavsky worked tirelessly, almost obsessively, to improve his voice, his movement, and gestures, watching himself in the mirror—a practice he later condemned" (p. 8).

- Moreover, whatever you do, don't model Robert De-Niro: "The imitation of a favorite actor can only create an external method, and not the inner soul" (p. 9).
- And don't act old style like Charlie Chapmen or the Three Stooges. "He was now determined to wage war against the clichés and routine 'lies' of the stage" (p. 21).
- Best to model Grandpa or Uncle Stew: "Perhaps influenced by Shchepkin, Stanislavski moved away from copying other actors, to find his models in real life" (p. 11).

Another author sums Stanislavski's method as "the art of achieving reality, real tears, real laughter, real expression, movement and voice" (Edward Dwight Easty, *On Method Acting: The Classic Actor's Guide to the Stanislavsky Technique as Practiced at the Actors Studio*, p. 15).

And voice matters in acting. When my brother's TV series got thwarted, I felt crushed yet relieved. You see, my brother planned on having me sing the theme song. Yet, I fretted how I'd fund studio time. A friend of mine had an amateur studio but no music-reading skill. So, I planned to fake it 'til I made it.

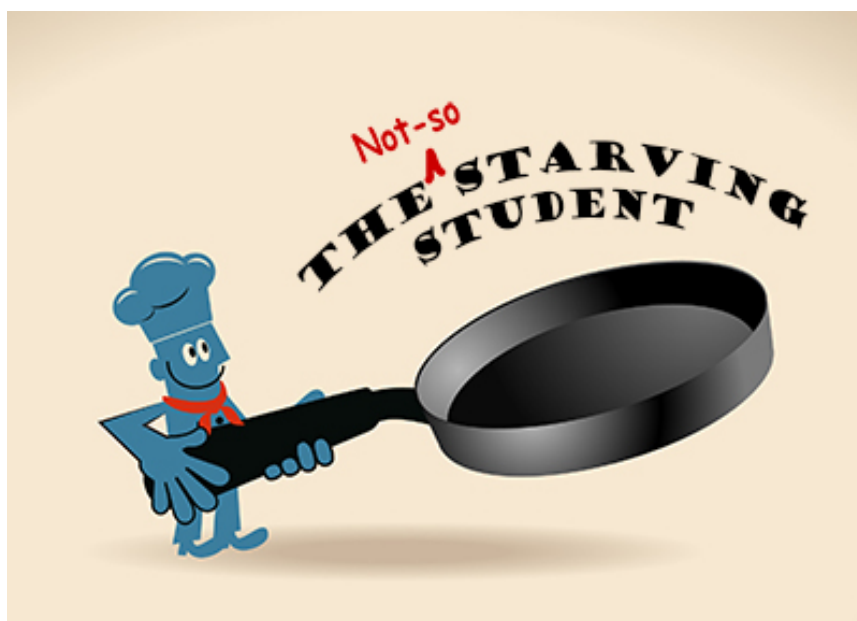
That's like Snoop Dog performing the soundtrack to Titanic. A paradox? I call it a creative spark!



The Not-So Starving Student

Grow Your Food in the Kitchen

Xin Xu



It's spring time, the time for gardening, the time for getting outdoors will be soon upon us (give or take a month for Canadians). Fortunately, for those with allergies or who are less outdoorsy, such as myself, gardening can be less taxing when done in the comfort of your kitchen. Yes, that's right. I'm talking about home gardens. For AU students, this could be especially useful if you're looking to save yourself a trip to the grocery store or the rising cost of some produce.

Many who might be interested at the idea of starting a home garden are held back by barriers such as

preparing your own supplies or the hassle of maintaining cleanliness. But once an effective ecosystem is created, the maintenance is quite minor, requiring only the occasional watering. The second biggest question that might be asked is "what should I grow?". There are so many possibilities! You might be worried flowering plants create pollen or that plants require trimming. Fear no more! We have a perfect list of essential homegrown herbs and produce that are fuss-free and even more delicious on your plate. It's thyme to start growing!

Herbs

Garlic Sprouts

Garlic sprouts are one of the easiest to grow for beginners in the kitchen. Having grown garlic sprouts in the kitchen since I was a child, I can say that there's very little chance of error. You simply plot a few cloves of garlic in a yogurt container as seen here, sprinkle some water and wait for it to sprout. I like using the sprouts for stir fry.



Basil

For those of you who have had authentic Italian pasta, you know that basil and pasta cannot be apart. Basil adds a fragrant touch to anything served in a salad bowl or on a pasta plate. Start by adding some top soil to an empty jam jar or yogurt container and burying 1-2 seeds under the soil. Next, place the jar near a window. Basil is relatively easy to grow and to use. After a month or two, remove a few leaves to add to your favorite dish.



Green onions

If you've been ordering too many green onion cakes from the local Chinese restaurant like me, this DIY is for you. Green onions are delicious in Chinese crepes, stir fries, salads and soups. I like to use an empty jar or cup and add water before placing a few stalks of green onion in the cup. Always place the plant near a window, preferably facing east or west so it can absorb plenty of sunshine.



Produce

Lettuce

After using almost an entire lettuce, save the root portion with a few small leaves and place in a container with water as shown below. In a week, you should see some new sprouts. I find lettuce to be a bit trickier than some of the other herbs, but if done correctly (assuming you saved the right portions), it could become a fruitful addition to your kitchen. To grow enough lettuce for a salad, try duplicating the containers and have multiple containers full of lettuce roots. I find Romaine lettuce to be easier to grow.



Celery

Similar to lettuce, save the stump of a full stalk of celery. The celery will sprout in about 5-8 days. Make sure to transfer your celery to a jar with topsoil in about a week's time to allow it to grow fully. If you want a healthy snack without running to the supermarket, here is the best alternative.



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



Student Sizzle — AU's Hot Social Media Topics

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



AthaU Facebook Group

Professor Bob posts a poll to gauge interest in an undergrad course about sex work and sex workers; so far the overwhelming majority of responses fall into the "hell, yes!" category. Bill Angela reports tech issues during an exam that shortened the available time; responses from students and AU reveal options in cases such as these. Lynette asks about T2202a info, which sparks off a discussion about recent changes for claiming tuition and education amounts.

Other posts include rescheduling an online exam, course registration deadlines, summer vacation tips, and courses ADMN 417, HADM 339, and MKTG

396.

Twitter

@AthabascaU tweets: "Announcing the #ImagineAU contest. Shoot a video, upload it to Instagram and be entered to win a weekly #AthabascaU prize package! Details --> <http://ow.ly/74Xw30iWJL0>."

@AthabascaUBiz tweets: "Phones and emails are so old school. #AthaUBiz offers support via chat now! Got a burning question and don't want to call? Just chat with us! Click the link to get started now - <http://goo.gl/zg1YHD>."

Music Review

Emily Rockarts

Drew Kolohon



With the release of her single “Inventor”, going on The Reason and Romance tour, and performing in upcoming shows in Halifax, Emily Rockarts has been having a busy year. Emily sings lead vocals in the folk/indie band of the same name, which also includes Dan Rougeau (guitar), Soren Nissen (bass), and Ian Wright (drums). This Canadian band is setting the bar high for the Toronto music scene.

Mapmaker was Emily’s first professional release; her vocals and song writing are polished and well rounded. Emily’s use of multiple musicians and instruments

add a depth to this EP. She writes her own songs, and, with this, it gives them an emotional attachment that is hard to find in the world of modern music and ghost writers. In the song “In the City” there is a playful piano line that you can tell she is having fun singing over. As the song progresses it adds more instruments and eventually ends with the same piano line from the start. This ebb and flow of energy is what makes this song so entertaining. In “Keeper” and “Flyby”, a much more somber tone is used, but she still uses her storytelling skills to paint an emotional landscape. The string instruments in both of these songs pair beautifully with Emily’s voice. But “Whale Song” is, by far, my favourite song on this album. Emily’s vocals sound like she’s taking inspiration from an actual whale singing. Never before did I think someone could vocalize a whale’s song, let alone make it into a catchy tune.

More recently, a couple weeks before the start of her tour, Emily released her single and video “Inventor”. In this single, Emily layers her voice to create a haunting chorus that leaves you inspired and uplifted. The gradual climb from her slow emotional singing to impassioned outro is what makes this song so powerful. The band has found the balance between her vocals and the instruments, creating a harmony that complements her personal style. The video for the song has an interesting moment where two-dimensional shapes that are dancing around morph into three dimensional shapes at the climax of the song.

Working her way across Canada and back made for some interesting stories posted on the bands blog. With stories and pictures from their tour, she gives her readers an interesting take on their cross-country trip. Being able to connect to Emily and the band on a personal level serves to strengthen her emotional connection to her audience. You can see the parallels between her music and the band’s blog through their strong story telling skills.

All of Emily’s music can be found on her [BandCamp page](#). Tour dates and posts to her blog can be found on her [website](#). I think Emily Rockarts is a name that we will be hearing for years to come.

Drew Kolohon is an avid music fan who is finishing up his Bachelor’s degree in English.

The Fit Student

Skinny-Ripped

Marie Well



Imagine Angelina Jolie flexing biceps and defined abs. Or Popeye's Olive Oil with bulging quads and glutes. Might you and I be the next skinny-ripped?

I carry a lean frame but can't seem to build muscle. Worse, my friends criticize my skinny look. I feel hurt by their words.

Yet, recently, my belt buckle needed a tighter hole. Two weeks later, an even tighter hole. My clothing sizes slipped from medium to extra small. But, store sizes seem crazy, don't they? Up a size one item, down the next. That's what the store clerk said. So, I brushed off the warnings and stayed hush.

I also bench press sixty pounds but get little feedback. Sadly, I can no longer hoist heavier weights, so I lift lighter some days. Maybe my age keeps me from getting stronger. Surely, that's why.

But a decade ago, I looked super lean—and muscular. Every month, I'd lift an extra 2.5 pounds. I looked fit even when I lost rapid weight. My figure caved in at the stomach, but bulged at the biceps, legs, shoulders, and glutes. So, I rocked a great bod. Aside from the bony rib cage, that is.

So why can't I build muscle today?

Because I dropped massive weight. I started at over 140 pounds. Then, a few months ago I visited my doctor. She weighed me in at 128 pounds—my leanest in ages. But then I saw my doctor yesterday. She weighed me in at 114 pounds—borderline malnourished.

My doctor asked me if I ate carbs outside of eleven servings of fruits and vegetables. I said just bran. So, she's sending me to a dietician.

But, wait! I record *every* calorie on my diet app: the chronometer. According to the app, most days I overeat. So, how could I have dropped eight sizes in eight months?

Well, I noticed I had set my app to *sedentary* despite exercising nearly two hours each day. Turns out, I've been eating daily deficits of four-hundred-calories. Smartly, I reset my app to *moderately active*.

The lesson? Watch your apps. Diet apps can fulfill—or kill—weight goals.

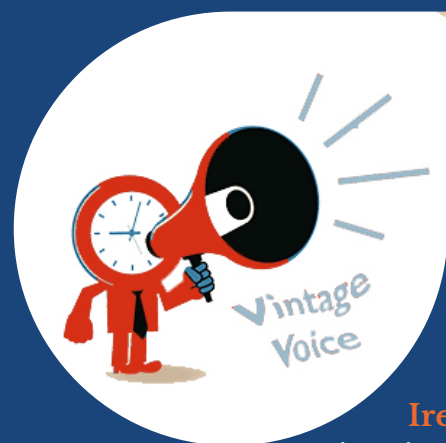
Anita Bean reveals the skinny on athletes' diets in her book *The Complete Guide to Sports Nutrition* (8th Edition):

- What should a fit-you chew? Eat these each day:
 - 3-5 portions vegetables,
 - 2-4 portions fruits,
 - 4-6+ portions carbs,
 - 2-4 portions calcium rich foods,
 - 4 portions protein rich foods (where 3 eggs equal 1 portion),

- And 2-3 healthy fats and oils (where 1 tablespoon peanut butter equals 1 portion) (p. 14).
- Eat more carbs than just a bowl of bran. “The more active you are and the greater your muscle mass, the higher your carbohydrates needs” (p. 7). Four to six portions of carbs a day—minimum!
- Light exercisers don’t need *extra* carbs. “During exercise lasting less than 45 minutes, there is no performance advantage to be gained by consuming additional carbohydrates” (p. 8).
- Moderate exercisers should *tease*-taste extra carbs: “For intense exercise lasting between 45 and 75 minutes, simply swilling (not swallowing) a carbohydrate drink in your mouth ... can improve performance ... thus allowing you to maintain exercise intensity for longer” (p. 8).
- Heavy exercisers should *swallow* extra carbs. “But for exercise lasting longer than about 1 hour, consuming between 30 and 60 g carbohydrate helps” (p. 8).
- Eat protein after workouts. “Experts recommend consuming ... 15 – 25 g of protein with each main meal as well as immediately after exercise” (p. 9).
- Why eat protein? “Extra protein is needed to compensate for the increased muscle breakdown that occurs during and after intense exercise, as well as to build new muscle cells” (p. 9).
- And don’t forget fats. “Athletes should consume a minimum of 20% energy from fat, otherwise they risk deficient intakes of fat-soluble vitamins and essential fatty acids” (p. 10).
- Good fats contain omega-3s—fats such as walnuts, flaxseed, and oily fish. “Omega-3s may be particularly beneficial for athletes, as they help increase the delivery of oxygen to muscles, improve endurance and may speed recovery and reduce inflammation and joint stiffness” (p. 10).

The day after my doctor visit, I gorged three nutritious meals, two healthy snacks, six Lindt chocolate balls, eight tablespoons peanut butter, and one loaded pizza. Still my size four pants sag.

On my way to ripped, my clothes falling off? *No problem!*



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

On the eve of St. Patrick's Day, we glance back at a pair of Ireland-themed articles.

Touring troubled Belfast. Writer John Buhler recounts his stay in Belfast, Ireland, still edgy from The Troubles. "It was startling for me to discover...that many of the men around the pub were convicted terrorists." [Travel Photo Feature—Belfast's Gritty Side](#), March 3, 2004.

Ireland at the movies. Christina M. Frey highlights some classic Ireland-inspired films, along with fascinating trivia. "In the original theatre release [of *The Luck of the Irish*], the scenes that take place in Ireland were filmed with a green filter in order to tint them a more 'Irish' colour." [Saturday Night at the \(Old\) Movies—The Wearing of the Green](#), March 12, 2010.

Motivation

Deanna Roney



Even if you love what you do, some days it can be hard to find the motivation to work on it. This lack of motivation can come from any number of sources and none of it speaks to how much you enjoy what you're doing. Sometimes it just doesn't want to work. I find that sitting and trying to force motivation is counterproductive. The intentions are good, but the results are not. You might find that you can push yourself and complete the work, but how much longer did it take, and is it your best work? I find that when I force something it isn't my best work and I

have to go back and significantly edit or rework.

Being conscious of the lack of motivations is the first sign that you should step away for a minute. It doesn't need to be long, we all have deadlines, but even a few minutes away can drastically improve the atmosphere. Even if you gather your things and just move to a new room or a new chair it can help reignite that creativity. Sometimes all I need to do is walk away from things. Do the dishes, put some laundry away, or, if I am feeling really stuck, take the dogs outside for a quick round of fetch. The fresh air, the amusement of the dogs struggling through a few feet of snow, the change in environment, it means my attention is on them, completely.

It usually only takes about 10 minutes of being away from the desk, the blank document, the growing to do list, to refresh. The best part of using this 10 minutes to take the dogs out or do the housework is that it feels productive. These tasks take my mind off the work and I still feel like I am getting something done, I'm not "wasting" time, I am just reallocating it. These are all things I would have to get done at some point in the day, so why not use them to reignite my motivation?

Ten minutes away, even on a strict deadline isn't that much time. And, for me, taking those ten minutes away means that when I come back, I will (usually) get the work done much faster than if I had tried to force my way through. I pick my task based on how I am feeling. If it is a minor breather I will do the housework, but if I am feeling really stuck the best thing I can do is take the dogs out. Doing housework can sometimes just add to the feeling of being stuck, it is a redundant task and can add to the problem if the mood is right. But, taking the dogs out rejuvenates any mood, it is hard not to laugh as they push through the snow, tackle each other, or both sprint back with each holding on to part of the toy.

Not everyone has a pet they can use as a distraction, but the change in environment is a big help, the fresh air, getting your body moving. So, if you can't laugh at your pet then take yourself for a short walk, forget about things for a few minutes, and when you get back you can hit that to do list with new vigor.

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

My Husband's Keeper

Dear Barb:

My husband and I have been married for ten years and we have three young children. We live fairly close to my husband's parents, so they have been quite involved with our family life. My problem is with my mother-in-law. I have always struggled to get along with her, but as she's getting older she is becoming more intrusive in our lives and I am fed up with it. My husband and I are arguing all the time about her. He needs to tell her to stay out of our lives but he says if I feel that way then I should tell her. Even the kids are complaining about her as she is always asking them where they are going and what they are doing. If she doesn't think they should go somewhere she will tell me or my husband that we should not allow them to go to such and such a place. I feel she is undermining us as parents. Through the years she has helped out a lot with the kids and I really do appreciate that, but now they are more independent, and it almost seems like she is trying to keep them from growing up. I feel so alone in this situation, as my husband is not supporting me at all. Do you have any advice or suggestions on how I can deal with this, or get my husband more involved?

Thanks, Sara.

Hi Sara:

Thanks for writing. I'm sure there are many daughters-in-law who are going through similar scenarios to what you are experiencing. Mothers-in-law can be difficult and often believe no one is good enough for their son. Frequently mothers do not want to relinquish control of their sons to another woman. Their attempts to control their daughters-in-law are an indirect way of maintaining some level of control over their sons. As well, it is common for mothers-in-law to meddle in the way couples parent their children—another way to maintain a place in their son's lives. There are ways you and your husband can prevent this from causing problems in your marriage. First, you and your husband need to set boundaries and follow through on these boundaries. Your husband seems to feel caught in the middle, but he needs to support you, rather than side with his mother. You are a family unit and you both have to agree on how you are going to raise your children and take care of your household. Your mother-in-law is the grandmother and should not be deciding how you will raise your children. Your mother-in-law's role should be as a supportive, loving grandmother to your children. I hope this information was helpful.

Good Luck Sara.

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.



Poet Maeve



Wanda Waterman





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IMPORTANT DATES

- **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 03:** [Facebook Live Event](#)
- **Apr 10:** [Deadline to register in a course starting May 1](#)
- **Apr 10:** [Council Changeover Meeting](#)

Staying Strong Through Life's Challenges

From illness and stressful exam periods, to failed relationships or a traumatic event such as a natural disaster, we face unexpected challenges throughout our lives. The **Student Lifeline** can help.

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

You can also take advantage of **Student Lifeline's** wealth of online parenting resources. Just log in to www.lifeworks.com (username: **AUSU**, password: **wellness**) to access a wealth of helpful articles and tools, including:

- [Staying Strong Through Life's Challenges](#) feature on the homepage
- [New Emergency Preparedness Toolkit](#) with valuable articles and more.

This is a FREE service for all AUSU members!

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



Fredericton Meet & Greet

AUSU is hosting a gathering for fellow Athabasca University students in Fredericton! This is a great opportunity to meet other AU students in your area, get to know some of your student council, and receive some free AUSU swag!

DATE: Thursday, March 22

TIME: 5:30pm - 7:00pm ADT

PLACE: [The Snooty Fox, 66 Regent Street, Fredericton](#)

Please RSVP by emailing services@ausu.org.



AU Quick Links

Having trouble navigating the AU website? Want an easy way to find out what resources are available to you?

Check out our AU Quick Links online [here](#).



Athabasca University
Quick Links

Courtesy of AUSU

CLASSIFIEDS

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

THE VOICE

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