



THE VOICE

Vol 26 Issue 47 2018-12-07

Meeting the Minds

Dr. Lloyd Robertson, Part II

Dodging Christmas Dangers

Take a Step Back

Toward a Badass Yuletide

Putting excess backin Xmas

Plus:

Happy Holidays from Plato

Shopping Strategically for the Holidays

and much more!



CONTENTS

The Voice's interactive Table of Contents allows you to click a story title to jump to an article. Clicking the bottom right corner of any page returns you here. Some ads and graphics are also links.

Features

Meeting the Minds: *Dr. Lloyd Robertson Part II*..... 4

Articles

Editorial: *'Tis the Season* 3

Ten Hardships to Embrace before 2018 12

Healthy Holiday Nibbles and Bites..... 15

Dodging Christmas Dangers 20

Shopping Strategically for the Holidays 21

Columns

Fly on the Wall: *Happy Holidays from Plato*..... 6

The Fit Student: *Worry* 11

The Porkpie Hat: *Towards a More Badass Yuletide* 14

Course Exam: *Hist 383* 16

The Creative Spark: *Make'em Giggle*..... 18

Dear Barb: *Hot Tub Games & Christmas Anxiety*..... 23

News and Events

AU-Thentic Events 7, 8

Scholarship of the Week 10

Student Sizzle 22

AUSU Update 25

Graphic

Poet Maeve: *Existence Precedes Acceptance* 24

The Voice Magazine

www.voicemagazine.org
301 Energy Square
10109 – 106 ST NW
Edmonton AB
T5J 3L7

Email

voice@voicemagazine.org

Publisher

AU Students' Union

Editor-In-Chief

Jodi Campbell

Managing Editor

Karl Low

Regular Contributors

Barb Godin, Scott Jacobsen,
Carla Knipe, Barbara
Lehtiniemi, Tara Panrucker,
Deanna Roney, Wanda
Waterman, Xin Xu

Views 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](#).

The Voice does not share its
subscriber list with anyone.
Even I don't look at it, it's
all on auto.

Volume 26, Issue 46

© 2018 by The Voice
Magazine

ISSN 2561-3634

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 'Tis The Season

Karl Low



The Christmas season is on the minds of our writer's this week, but we're going to start the whole thing off with the second part of our Feature interview with Dr. Robertson, who taught psychotherapy as part of the MAIS degree. The second part of the interview digs deeper into Dr. Robertson's views of his chosen area and the public perception of it, including where he thinks it needs to go in future. It's interesting and, if you think about it, with possible implications for other fields generally considered to be the "soft sciences". Definitely what I consider a good read.

But speaking of good reads, I want to know what you, the readers of the Voice, have found particularly good over the past twelve months. That's right, our hunt for The Best of the Voice, 2018 has already begun. I've got some favorites in mind already, but I want to know what you thought were the stand-outs of the last year. So send me your thoughts, your links, or even if you don't quite remember what that article was, you just know it was the one about that thing and the other thing and it came out somewhere around that point in the year, let me know that at karl@voicemagazine.org. I'm always curious to know what readers like you are connecting with.

And given that the alternative is that I make all the picks myself, you're probably better off taking a few moments to send me something.

In the meantime, this issue we have a few curious takes on the holiday season. A couple of articles on how to avoid the dangers of the season, while another recommends we dive whole-heartedly into them. And while many people like to use this season to tell you to look back and reflect upon the good things in your life, we go the other way and point out how you should instead take a look at the bad things that happened, if only to see how maybe they're not so bad after all.

And as an added twist, just when you thought the holidays meant you could take a break from your studies, we come around and point out how maybe you could use your studies as a break from the holidays. After all, which do you really find more stressful, your schoolwork, or the demands of the Christmas season?

Of course, we also keep you up to date with the scholarships; events; social media; life, fitness, and studying advice; course reviews, and more that you need to keep you informed and updated about what's going on at AU.

Finally, I should note that December is going to be a shorter month for us, as there will be no issue on December 28th. We'll be taking that time to recover from the holidays, and then the January 4th issue will be our Best Of 2018 issue, giving our writers the time to recover from New Years. (We tried doing a normal issue for the first week of January once. It didn't go well.) But until then, enjoy the read!



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

MEETING THE MINDS

INTERVIEWS with AU's EDUCATORS



Dr. Lloyd Hawkeye Robertson is a Faculty Member in the Master of Arts – Integrated Studies Program of Athabasca University, who is now in career transition. He has a private practice as an educational psychologist and counsellor. In this second part of our two-part interview, we dig into Dr. Robertson's views on what's happening in the field of Psychotherapy, and what needs to happen next.

What is the current state of the discipline in providing explanations of human motivation? How does a modern psychotherapist work with a patient, e.g., assess their problems if any, gauge their therapeutic needs, and decide on treatment for the short-haul or the long-term, and so on?

Psychotherapy has been dominated by the medical model with abnormal or self-destructive behaviour seen as symptomatic of an underlying disease. The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of the American Psychological Association is the “bible” for diagnosing such diseases in Canada and the list keeps growing with every new edition. If you use psychometrics to make diagnoses, you are basically using the Bell Curve – the top 2% on any given scale are considered “clinical.” Sometimes it makes sense to look at clusters of

symptoms for common themes, and sometimes it is instructive to measure a person's responses against a normed control group; however, it is possible to do so without relying on the medical model. It is possible, for example, that getting depressed is a logical decision given one's circumstances and past experience. If that is the case, then anti-depressant medication is, at best, a band-aid and a diagnosis is, at worst, an excuse for accepting that band-aid. There is no virus that caused the “disease” of alcoholism. You didn't get it from the saliva of another alcoholic. No, the alcoholic made some life choices based a host of needs and circumstances and can choose to make better choices. Granted, given the chemical effects on brain chemistry, this can be difficult, difficult but not impossible. I think my profession, especially Counselling Psychology, is moving away from the medical model and toward collaborative and educational models. I am encouraged by the recent popularity of Positive Psychology which works on client strengths and client definitions of what is pleasurable and meaningful.

What were failed hypotheses in the history of psychotherapy? What were successful hypotheses in the history of psychotherapy?

I think Jung's theory of the collective unconscious could be best described as “unfalsifiable.” But a more immediate failure was Freud's notion of penis envy. Adler immediately broke with Freud on this issue pointing out that if women are envious of men it likely has more to do with being

in a subordinate position with respect to power relationships and not that they actually want to have a penis. The idea that we begin life as a “blank slate,” popular in the 1960s, has been debunked. In the modern era, the notion that testosterone leads to “toxic male sexuality” is another sexist idea rooted in a dominant ideology.

I think the early notion of the inferiority complex has stood up well. I think the idea that behaviour can be shaped by operant conditioning is sound providing that is not taken to be the whole story. I think the genetic basis of “the big five” including extraversion, conscientiousness, openness to experience, agreeableness and neuroticism has been demonstrated. The efficacy of Cognitive Behavioural Therapy in treating certain conditions such as depression, anxiety and psychological trauma has been demonstrated. The importance of the therapeutic relationship in predicting outcomes has been demonstrated with implications for the individualization of therapy.

Looking at the history of psychotherapy, the people most of us know about are Sigmund Freud and Carl Jung. What made their contributions to the history of psychotherapy important?

Freud is best known for his tripartite division of the psyche into id, ego and superego presaging modern psychologists like Susan Blackmore who contend that nature and nurture are both equally deterministically oppressive. I think Freud's greatest contribution is that he popularized the idea that psychology is a science. And he was a scientist if you use, as a definition, the careful observation of phenomena leading to reasoned inference as exemplified by classical Greeks like Plato, Aristotle, and the humanist Democritus. He was not a scientist in the modern sense that relies on hypothesis testing and random sampling. Freud's second greatest contribution was that he brought the study of human sexuality out of the constraints imposed by Victorian prudishness by making it central to his theories.

Jung's conceptualization of archetypes from which we create meaning has application to cultural and self studies. His notion that there exists a collective unconscious is controversial. Clearly all cultures at all times cannot have the same collective unconscious, and when the notion is broken down to human collectives it becomes problematic. Although Jung was never a Nazi, his conceptualization of the collective unconscious was used to support the notion that the so-called “Aryan race” had a particular mission and destiny. Jung's earlier comment that the psychology of Freud and Adler might be okay for the Jews but his psychology is for the “Volk” did not help.

And who should we know about in the history of psychotherapy but probably don't?

Alfred Adler. It is instructive that you failed to ask me about him along with Freud and Jung, yet his contributions may be more lasting. That is not your fault, or the fault of popular culture, but a reflection of the historic power relations within my profession. For example, you are aware that Humanist Psychotherapy began in the 50s and 60s as a “third wave” reaction to Behaviorism and Psychoanalysis. Therapists like Abraham Maslow and Carl Rogers said people had a striving for self-actualization and therapy should be client centred. Yet, Adler had been saying the same things, using different terminology, half a century earlier. He said people have a striving for perfection and that there are at least two experts – the therapist who is an expert in how people change and the patient (the term “client” was not yet in vogue) who is expert on his self. Therapy was pictured as a collaboration between two experts.

Perhaps the humanist psychotherapists failed to credit Adler because he also had a foot in the Behaviourist camp. His “homework assignments” were a method of shaping and reinforcing behaviour. But the classical behaviourist might have been put off by Adler's support for the idea that mankind has consciousness and the power of choice. In this way Adler anticipated

Cognitive-Behaviourism. The founder of Rational Emotive Behaviour Therapy, Albert Ellis, did credit Adler's influence in the development of his school of psychotherapy.

In the late twentieth century, Narrative Therapy proposed that humans are meaning makers and that clients are in need of re-writing their self-narratives to edit out self-defeating assumptions. Adler did something similar in suggesting that our worldviews are shaped by numerous influences, beginning in childhood, and that therapy included editing (re-authoring) self-defeating worldviews and motivations.

Previously, I noted that psychotherapists are increasingly describing themselves as "eclectic" as they borrow from various traditions. In Adler we have the means to unite most psychotherapies under one theoretical tent. Were that to happen, psychology would have matured into a true science united in a Khunian paradigm.

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



Fly on the Wall Happy Holidays from Plato



Jason Sullivan

Loving our Learning as the Spirit of the Season

Christmas in July might have been the brainchild of a mind trapped in the December holiday rush. Some rugged calendar pioneer sensed the invisible energy of fellow shoppers, buzzing thick like mountain electrical lines receiving snowflake shocks during a winter blizzard, and thought, *why me, why now!* Or maybe s/he gazed upon row upon row of traffic-jammed autos on an icy freeway and longed to just melt and drain the frozen swamp and get down to that elusive *Holiday Spirit* itself. Seasons greetings, rat race!

This vanguard thinker must have said *wouldn't it be nice to just displace and postpone Christmas to a later date?* Summer would have seemed a prime temporal location, sufficiently distant and knowingly open to the possibility of abstention in the face of woos from the likes of fishing, camping and hiking. As it turns out, Christmas in July was just another marketing scheme, but it may nevertheless tantalize we hard-nosed AU pupils who find our meticulous schedules and meritorious routines interrupted and trampled by seasonal expectations (Westover, online). Happily, December upheaval also may draw us closer, as it were, to our chosen discipline of study. After all, those we love most are at the core of the seasonal affect of this month of bonding: our course material need not be an exception.

As distance students treading a fine snail trail between multiple life realities and doing so, in great part, as masters of our own timetable, it'd be great to displace a drastic shift from the routine onto the universal future and just keep plugging away on life. If it ain't broke, don't fix it, right? But we can't. And maybe, just maybe, like the Grinch who saw the light, we too can experience the joy of the season while still *getting our schoolwork done*.

The prospect of keeping our study regimes intact and continuing our noble toil through the holiday season may seem well-nigh impossible. Unlike students at brick and mortar universities, rosy faced and joyous with post-exam delirium as they ride a snowboard halfpipe through a two-week winter break, our six-month contract dates loom apace. *But wait!* The spirit of the season can help rather than hinder our studies: just as December can mean anything from winter solstice to Hanukkah candles to a solemn appreciation of the Flying Spaghetti Monster (pasta Christmas dishes are woefully under-represented this month but try snail shell pasta with taco-seasoned ground beef!), it's possible to pause, take stock, and gain a greater sense of where we're at in our AU journey. It all starts with appreciating how our sense of place has been affected academically by our studies. Do we now feel more at home with ourselves and in our world?

If we truly enjoy our major, we're apt to find out this time of year; studying will beckon us amidst the chaos of the season because we enjoy our work. Likewise, December's apt to provide the answer to how married—committed, as it were—we are to our major. This is because our circular ripples of procrastination here expand to include gift shopping, house decorating, cookie baking, and event planning. If we've picked prudently, studying starts to seem a pleasant pause and peaceful repose on a wintry afternoon. Like chestnuts roasting on an open fire or Brazil nuts cracked with a pair of shed pliers, coursework can lift our spirits and embody a rock of stability amidst the frenetic December pace.

Memorizing brain structures out of our PSYCH 290 textbook, for instance, may suddenly seem a welcome reprieve. On the other hand, December can honestly make coursework seem like a nuisance better chucked to the side until the New Year where it can be re-addressed along with other resolutions. Hey, a union without some tumult would be closer to a traditional south-Asian marriage to a tree than a real engagement, and the initial excitement that shoved us off on this academic adventure is bound to lose some sheen in the face of a time of jolliness and merrymaking (Sharma, online). Heck, we don't want to make things miserable for ourselves, right?

AU-thentic Events

Upcoming AU Related Events

AU and Bow Valley College celebrate Memorandum of Action

Mon, Dec 10, 11:00 am to 12:00 pm MST
AU - Calgary Campus, 6th Floor Lobby
Area, 345 - 6 Avenue SE, Calgary AB

In person

Hosted by AU

news.athabascau.ca/events/athabasca-university-and-bow-valley-college-celebrate-memorandum-of-action/

Register online at above link

The Graduate Student Research Series: Challenges and Resiliency in Aboriginal Adults with Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder

Tues, Dec 11, 2:00 to 3:00 pm MST

Online

Hosted by AU Faculty of Graduate Studies

www.eventbrite.ca/e/fgs-presents-the-graduate-student-research-series-featuring-melanie-samaroden-master-of-counselling-tickets-52673469766

Register online at above link

BComm/CPA Info Session

Tues, Dec 11, 5:00 to 6:00 pm MST

Online

Hosted by AU Faculty of Business

business.athabascau.ca/event-details/bcomm-cpa-information-session-9/

Register online at above link

All events are free unless otherwise specified

Yet, if we enjoy our coursework, as most students I've spoken with in grouped MAIS studies do, ambivalence is bound to grow into a return of our academic glow even as the season of distractions arrives. If we've picked our major from our hearts as well as our pocketbooks, then our passion will be there for us when we need a break from the festivities. Instead of just one more item on a list of chores, it might pop to the top like a walnut escaping a nutcracker in an undersea showing of *The Nutcracker's Suite* meets *SpongeBob Squarepants*. We may not all pick our family or jobs but at some level our AU major is something that beckoned us to future prosperity, both economic and personal. And during the Holiday season it may find a treasured place in our days busy though they be.

We're in good company when we consider the personal nature of our relationship with our studies: it's a love of learning itself that drives us onward and, perhaps, also what draws us close to loved ones in general. The spirit of the season may impart community and connection because we have a connection with one another at a higher plane than that of mundane survival and adaptation. Plato (423-348 B.C.E), in a riotous and seminal philosophical tract titled *Symposium*, compares the pursuit of wisdom and knowledge with the attainment of true love and completion. While a selfie between us and our diploma (captioned with a meme-friendly "*you complete me*") might seem a bit much, give the ol' broad ("Plato" means "broad") fellow's work a gander:

"When a person meets the half that is his very own...the two are struck from their sense by love, by a sense of belonging to one another. No one would think it was the intimacy of sex-that mere sex is the reason each lover takes so great and deep a joy in being with the other. It's obvious that the soul of every lover longs for something else; his soul cannot say what it is, but like an oracle it has a sense of what it wants" (Plato, 28).

Beyond economic, in a crass sense prurient, interests remains our deep desire to learn about our world and ourselves and come to place our life's essence in a better relation to both. Plato then has Socrates question why we desire learning or love; do we only seek what we already lack?

"So love needs beauty, then, and does not have it?"

"Necessary", the character Agathon answers" to which Socrates implies tritely "It was a beautiful speech anyway, Agathon". The suggestion here is that our longing to better ourselves through our love of learning means that we are missing something crucial in our lives; this may be true in one sense but also leaves out the accumulating excellence we attain as we proceed through our relationship with the academic process. Our cuppeth filleth uppeth, as it were.

More AU-thentic Events

Online MBA Application Webinar

Wed, Dec 12, 10:00 to 11:00 am MST
Online

Hosted by AU Faculty of Business
business.athabasca.ca/event-details/online-mba-executives-application-information-session/
Register online at above link

Research Webinar Series:

Athabasca River Basin Research

Wed, Dec 12, 10:00 am to 12:00 pm MST
Athabasca University, Peace Hills Trust
Tower, 12th floor, Room 1222,
10011 - 109 Street, Edmonton AB
In person and online

Hosted by AU
news.athabasca.ca/events/research-webinar-series-athabasca-river-basin-research/

See above link for in-person registration and livestream link

Seasonal Cheer - Edmonton

Thurs, Dec 13, 5:30 to 8:30 pm MST
Beira, 9570 76 Avenue NW, Edmonton AB
In person

Hosted by AU
news.athabasca.ca/events/seasonal-cheer-edmonton/

Register online at above link

All events are free unless otherwise specified

Plato expounds his view that the act of learning, *making oneself more verb than noun*, is a form of enlightenment. We reach for the purity of all that is true and Good; wisdom itself is thus a form of love for knowledge of the kind that transcends immediate corporeal concerns. The spirit of the season, beyond physical gifts, parallels the meaning of academic learning in terms of its tangible impact on our identity. In this sense when we continue our studies through the Christmas season we actually, even when begging off certain familial and peer engagements to write assignments in our Monk's cell study space, are participating in spirit by engaging in that which transcends the material realm and enters the mental terrain of love.

Be it Charles Dickens' classic Scrooge or any number of modern plays upon the stock character of the Grinchy charlatan of consumerist snake-oil, those unaware of the authentic meaning of the season become caught up in the morass of activity without gleaning the glow of the purpose. There's a meaning in all this. By making our coursework part of the Holidays, rather than a nuisance to be avoided, we give ourselves one of the best gifts of all: an authentic, enlightened mental experience.

If we abide with our studies and have evolved a positive relationship with them as a vital and nurturing part of our life, then December can provide opportunities for joyful labour rather than reticent annoyance. Responsibility can mean joyful fulfillment. Even if our studies can't exactly constitute a form of merrymaking (although an Eggnog might go fine with essay revisions) we can at least know we're fighting the good fight to better ourselves. We've done well to arrive here, after all.

Humility also comes with the season; it doesn't take an upset apple cart of one's meticulous study routine to realize how challenging our process is and lucky we are to undertake it. Plato summarized: *"What's especially difficult about being ignorant is that you are content with yourself, even though you're neither beautiful and good, nor intelligent. If you don't think you need anything, of course you won't want what you think you don't need."* (Plato, 49). Surely none of us re-entered schooling as adults because we were willing to rest on our laurels. Athabasca is about taking the long-view of enlightenment and developing the ability to see the light at the end of the tunnel while still appreciating the moment and those with whom we share it. Our chosen area of study is a constant partner through the rest of our year so there's no abandoning it now.

The inevitable passing of the seasons, as with the temporal passing of our courses, is something we can take comfort in when the inevitable hullabaloo of the Holidays approaches crescendo. We aren't the same students, parents, siblings, or friends as when we began our time at AU. Studying has become part of who we are, like caring for a pet or bringing in firewood or taking the trash out. We're making compost of the spirit, as it were. Further to this, Plato has a lady character named Diotima chastise Socrates for misunderstanding love, *"It's no surprise that you were led into thinking of love as you did...I conclude that you thought love was being loved rather than being a lover"* (Plato, 49).

Yet far from supine recipients of education, we are actual participants in our betterment; it's an active process. AU is a largely private, individual endeavour that births new versions of ourselves as academic osmosis works its magic. We open our minds to change; our learning leads us to interact anew with our material and the world around us. Plato describes we learners as follows:

"He is always being renewed and in other respects passing away, in his hair and flesh and bones and blood and his entire body. And it's not just in his body, but in his soul too, for none of his manners, customs, opinions, desires, pleasures, pains, or fears ever remains the same, but some are coming to be in him while others are passing away. And what is stranger than that is that not only does one branch of knowledge come to be in us while another passes away and that we are never the same even in respect of our knowledge, but that each single piece of knowledge

has the same fate. For what we call studying exists because knowledge is leaving us, because forgetting is the departure of knowledge, while studying puts back a fresh memory in place of what went away, thereby preserving a piece of knowledge, so that it seems to be the same." (Plato, 55)

When a family member asks us *what we're taking in school* it's the ultimate chance to summarize in sparkling festive detail our academic evolution and to ourselves recall just how far we've come over the past months and years. Our education is almost a member of the family if we choose to think of it that way. Celebrating the season should include celebrating all that we've learned in the past year. Particularly from a MAIS interdisciplinary point of view, all of life is gleeful grist for the mill, whether it's applying trigonometry to a Christmas tree or interview skills to a sibling's new boyfriend. December almost begs to be a pleasurable part of our studies rather than a stressful intrusion or distraction.

December allows us to assess ourselves as wisdom-gatherers. In a sense the holidays are an elective we never knew we had; we can open ourselves to the experience and maybe bring back some intellectual goodies to our core studies. We're always learning now that we've acquired the acquisitive itch of inquiry. When the Holiday going gets tough and grows into stress, perhaps our studies can be just the thing to keep us sane.

References

- Plato. (1989). Symposium. Alexander Nehamas & Paul Woodruff, Eds. Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company.
- Henderson, B. (2016) 'Church of the Flying Spaghetti Monster'. Retrieved from <https://www.venganza.org/category/holiday/>
- Sharma, C. (2014). 'About 500 Hindu and Buddhist Child Brides Married to a Tree'. Retrieved from <http://www.asianews.it/news-en/About-500-Hindu-and-Buddhist-child-brides-married-to-a-tree-30302.html>
- Westover, J. (2017). 'History of Christmas in July'. Retrieved from <https://mymerrychristmas.com/history-of-christmas-in-july/>

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.



Scholarship of the Week

Digging up scholarship treasure for AU students.

Scholarship name: PDFelement 2018 Scholarship Contest

Sponsored by: PDFelement Wondershare

Deadline: December 31, 2018 (earlier entries have an advantage; see tips)

Potential payout: \$1000 USD

Eligibility restriction: Applicants must be over 17 years of age and enrolled in an accredited post-secondary institution.

What's required: An email with contact info, along with a 2- to 3-minute video on the topic of "PDF in education."

Tips: Enter early: after PDFelement posts your video on their [Youtube](#) channel, share the link with friends to garner valuable votes.

Where to get info: pdf.wondershare.com/scholarship.html



Marie Well



The cure? I could write out “how likely (0 – 100%) is it that this will actually happen” (Leaby, location

As for another worry, do you fret over fattening up? I've gained weight. Now, I weigh 124.6 pounds with my runners on. But I cling to memories from my youth of mum plumping me up to 180 pounds. So, I worry.

Almost daily, I ask my boyfriend if my stomach looks big or if I've gained weight. He doesn't care what weight I'm at. He loves me whether I'm chunky or thin. When he says I look too skinny, I feel reassured—for the next hour. But soon after, I ask him again.

I even started watching YouTube documentaries on weight loss. So now, when I open my YouTube app, documentaries on obesity pop up. Image after image of weeping overweight people. At 124.6 pounds, I've somehow joined the club.

The cure? "Don't turn worries into catastrophes. Is what you're worrying about the end of the world or merely an inconvenience?" (Leaby, location 2038, 34%). Well, it's Christmas. I plan to binge eat 2000 calories in chocolate like last year. And when I had dipped to 113 pounds a year ago, I looked more alarming than alluring. Now, weight-lifting makes the extra pounds look solid, not pudgy.

But you won't catch me worrying about money! After all, "millions of people survive bankruptcy—in fact, bankruptcy is often a fresh start on life, freeing people of the burden of debt and allowing them to keep all future earnings" (location 1983, 34%). Bankruptcy makes for the perfect Christmas gift, perhaps the one for your mother-in-law.

References

Leaby, Robert L. (2005). *The Worry Cure: Seven Steps to Stop Worrying from Stopping You*. New York: Three Rivers Press.



Ten Hardships to Embrace Before the End of 2018

Wanda Waterman



searching for the good.

The name of "Pollyanna," the child heroine invented by Eleanor Porter in 1913, is often used (by people who haven't read the book) to mean shallow, blind optimism. But a careful reading of the book holds a different story.

Pollyanna's early years had been a long and dismal trial, ending in the loss of both parents. But before her father died, he taught Pollyanna "the glad game," a kind of existential experiment that would get her through almost any hardship. The glad game meant rejoicing with gratitude in the face of life's good fortune and, in the face of perceived misfortune,

There were limits, of course. One didn't, for example, take joy in death, and Pollyanna eventually realised that it's much easier to tell others to cheer up than it is to cope with profound personal loss.

The glad game eventually thawed out the uptight New Englanders in Pollyanna's little North Country town, setting them up not only for a deeper enjoyment of life but also for the kind of perseverance that doesn't balk at difficulties.

We could all use a little of that right now, toward the end of a year that has in many ways been a brutal one. So here are just a few things that look dreadful at first glance but shine with serenity on closer inspection.

If you've made a bad decision . . .

. . . you've been handed one of the greatest learning opportunities life has to offer. This might just pay off in a big way in 2019.

If you're poorer than you'd like to be . . .

. . . you're not one of those evil people that God punishes with money. Joe Moore's observation, "If you want to know what God thinks of money, look at the people He gives it to," doesn't stop people from pursuing wealth, but it should make you stop and consider whether your time might be better spent just being a better person. After all, you really can't take it with you.

If you feel like you don't fit in where you are . . .

. . . it's because in some way you're better than these people. You may be smarter, or better looking, or more sensitive, or less superficial. Whatever it is, they don't have room for you here. In 2019 you should move on and find your true tribe.

If you can't seem to be able to finish anything . . .

. . . you just haven't found a project that engages you. Find one. In 2019.

If you find yourself underemployed or unemployed . . .

. . . you've just won a temporary window to reflect on life and live it to the fullest. Something amazing is waiting for you in 2019; time to figure out what that might be.

If you've had periods of great suffering and want in your life . . .

. . . these will give you great prestige when you tell people about them later, when you're a great success. Who knows? Maybe next year!

If your partner seems cold and unloving . . .

. . . see it as proof of your wonderful kindness, patience, and tolerance. Your partner chose you because of your big heart. Yes, it's true: Difficult people choose to shack up with good people because only good people will stick around and be patient. You may feel you got the dirty end of the stick but look on the bright side: the fact that another human being saw that much good in you should inspire oodles of self-esteem. Run with it.

If you've lost someone you loved very much . . .

. . . your time with them was an amazing privilege. Honour it by being thankful. Remember all the beautiful things they taught you and start applying them seriously to your life. Lives must end but love itself is eternal. Live in it.

If you've lost someone you can never replace . . .

. . . remember that their irreplaceability is proof of *your* irreplaceability. Yes, you matter. You weren't given life so you could have something to brag about at your next high school reunion.

You mean something. You have gifts not granted to anyone else, ever. Use them for the better good, starting in 2019.

If you're completely fed up with the state of the world today . . .

. . . remember that widespread dissatisfaction is an important precursor to positive, long-term change. Maybe in 2019 we can all be a part of that.

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



Porkpie Hat Toward a More Badass Yuletide



Darjeeling Jones

Family, friendships, physical wellbeing, peace of mind, and spiritual fulfillment—these are obviously all important aspects of a rich, well-rounded life. But, only when indulged in in moderation. When taken too far they can become a crutch, or possibly a distraction. A distracting crutch, let's say; one that's being wielded about in an enclosed space filled with valuable objects, like a high-end antique shop, for instance, thus diverting one's attention from the more practical matters at hand, i.e. purchasing said antiques. I think we can all agree on that.

Fortunately for us, the winter holiday season is once again upon us, providing the opportunity to adjust our perspectives, and take a more balanced approach to our existence. Sadly, I have often witnessed some lost soul or other decry what they describe as the “world-weary cynicism of rampant consumerism” yada, yada. They say this as if it were a bad thing. I have tried to understand, but just can't. For myself, December brings with it the most glorious materialistic tizzy of the year. It is a heartwarming, nostalgic celebration of visceral pleasures and sensory overload.

Being super in touch with my own existential higher being, I would never judge the journey of another. I am, however, saddened by their sickening self-obsession and inability to enter into the spirit of things, thereby tossing a sodden passive-aggressive blanket on my own revelries. Assuming I cared. So, rather than criticizing another's failings, I will “pay it forward,” by offering just a couple of timely pointers about how to shuck more joy out of the holidays.

First, and possibly most important, buy cool stuff. Especially on the Big Day, when so many of us demonstrate our deepest feelings by showering each other with items we've purchased, you will undoubtedly bask in the warm glow of genuine approval if you give gifts that are unique and interesting. Please steer away from the tried and true trinkets, sweets, and clothing items. Super tacky. Instead, why not give your friends and loved ones something they would never think to buy for themselves? Just between us, my own shopping list this year includes a silver-plated trepanning kit, a taxidermied sturgeon, and a wax cylinder recording, circa 1903, of spectral voices recorded inside an abandoned Russian insane asylum. (In case you find these verifiably

authentic objects to be in any way intriguing, I will hopefully be able to sort out some unfortunate legal misunderstandings and will once again be taking credit card orders on my personal website in the near future.)

My second big piece of advice would be to scrap the whole boring turkey dinner and mediocre wine thing. Yawn. Instead, try spicing it up a bit with some more exotic and unexpected fare. This year, for instance, I will be serving a repast of absinthe, potted snails, gingered orchids, and roasted swan in juniper berries. Nor should you shy away from such vintage, all-but-lost yuletide traditions as slow-cooked moose marrow, or flambeed thymus gland.

Try it, and you will surely see, my precious beauties. By embracing - nay, nakedly wallowing about in - the sensory and materialistic excesses of the season, we have a real opportunity to make a difference in the world, to find the true magic of Christmas, and at the same time stick one in the eye of the naysayers. Happy excess, to one and all!



Healthy Holiday Nibbles and Bites

Tara Panrucker



With If you're anything like me, your willpower takes an extended leave of absence when you're presented with overflowing tables and trays of tasty holiday appetizers. Chances are you'll find me hovering like a ravenous vulture over the snack table, gluttonously shoveling handfuls of everything delectable into my mouth. No, I do not have an off button for salty or savoury snacks.

Indeed, health conscious students can find the holidays challenging. With so many mouth-watering temptations lurking everywhere, the fear of the consequences and repercussions of holiday over-indulgence is intense.

Have no fear! Nutritious choices for holiday appetizers and snacks are here! Instead of heart burn, insomnia, and indigestion, plan ahead to ensure a more settled digestive tract.

- Raw nuts in the shell, with the aid of a good old-fashioned nutcracker, slows you down and makes you work for your food by having to crack the nuts free of their shells before

popping them in your mouth for a satisfying crunch.

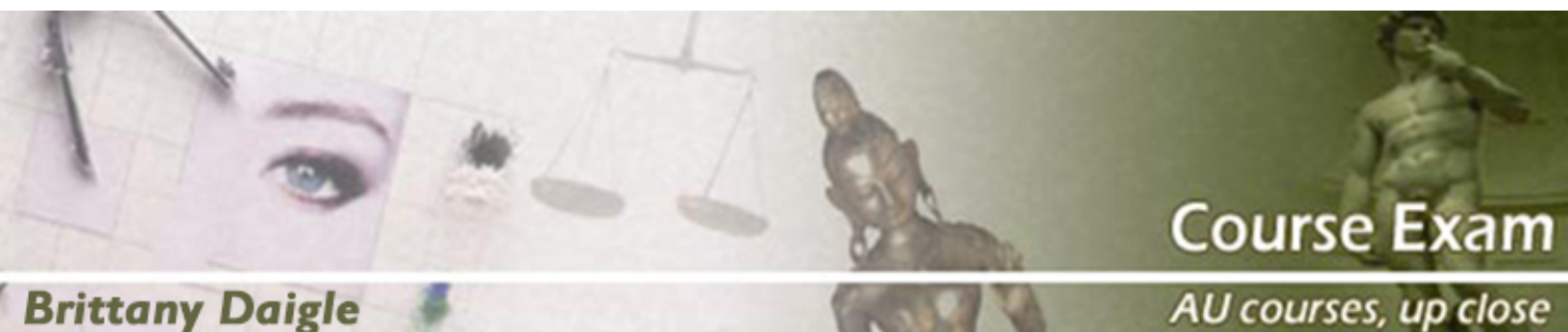
- More Mandarin oranges means more Vitamin C to ward off the holiday germs people are unwittingly sharing. One a day keeps the flu away.
- Make smaller portions of dips and sauces if you're eating on your own so you don't end up consuming a giant bowl of dip all by yourself. Guilty as charged.
- Enjoy the pleasure of sucking a candy cane while studying—not only does the peppermint scent energize your brain, but the candy lasts a good deal longer than say, a chocolate melting instantly in your mouth.
- Unleash your artistic skills and create an artfully arranged plate of wreaths or Christmas trees out of bright, crunchy chopped vegetables. Make an arty health statement. Raw

vegetables need never be boring again, and you can eat as many as you want without fear of heart failure.

- Kick up the nutrition notch on dips by making spinach, artichoke, and Tzatziki with cucumber and garlic. Extra healthy points for preparing it with low fat yogurt instead of sour cream.
- Roast cauliflower coated in aromatic curry and other spices is a sweet and savoury holiday nibble.
- Make staying hydrated more pleasurable by adding slices of cucumber, orange, or cranberries to your water pitcher for flavour, in between beer and wine beverages.
- Opt for anti-oxidant, rich, dark chocolate instead of sugary white or milk chocolate.
- Make a giant bowl of spicy tomato salsa instead of a fat-filled, heavy cheese ball for dipping. The spicier the salsa the better the sweatier detox!
- Chicken kebobs with a light Tzatziki are a great protein-filled choice for party snacks.

Luckily, over-indulging over the Christmas season is not the most horrible thing that can occur in a student's life. Do your best to be mindful about how much you're eating and keep food portions in check. But also relish the abundance of goodness we have available at our fingertips and feel the gratitude for the delicious foods we are able to eat. Complaining about a few extra pounds or too much temptation in front of us is insulting to the richness of the universe. Gratitude, on the other hand, is the finest gift of all, no matter what the season.

Tara Panrucker lives on Vancouver Island and is seeking a General Arts Degree at AU.



Brittany Daigle

Course Exam

HIST 383 (The Vikings)

Course Exam

AU courses, up close

Brittany Daigle

HIST 383 (The Vikings) is a three-credit, senior-level humanities course that surveys the political, military, economic, social, cultural, and religious history of one of early medieval Europe's most famous peoples. To engage students in the study of the Vikings, the course presents primary source readings from the period as well as current scholarly interpretations by historians and archaeologists. Through researching a specific historical topic in detail, students will exercise research, critical thinking, and writing skills. Students should note that there are no prerequisites for this course and there is a Challenge for Credit option if that is something of interest to you.

HIST 383 is made up of twelve units, two quizzes weighing two percent (one based on library research skills and the other based on the Chicago documentation); three assignments with one weighing five percent (a research plan and preliminary bibliography), a review of a scholarly article or essay worth twenty percent, and a research paper worth 30 percent; a quiz weighing one percent (based on using evidence); and the final examination that's worth forty percent. You should note that each quiz, assignment, and the final exam should be taken in the order shown

on the online syllabus as they build on each other. The twelve units cover several interesting topics, which include ships, swords, colonies of the north Atlantic, religion, culture, Viking homelands, Vikings in different parts of the world, and the end of the Viking age. The final examination for this course must be taken online with an AU-approved exam invigilator at an approved invigilation center. To receive credit for HIST 383, students must achieve a minimum of fifty percent on the final examination and a minimum composite course grade of fifty percent.

Melanie Cook has worked with Athabasca University as an instructor since January of 2005 and she has been an alternate tutor for HIST 383 occasionally over the past year. She states, “My academic background includes a B.A. degree in Psychology and then a specialized B.A. Honors degree in History from the University of Alberta. I went on to complete my M.A. at Queen's University in Kingston, Ontario. In my history degrees I studied and researched medieval, early modern, and English history but specifically focused on women's and gender history within these timeframes and areas. Among the courses I took, I studied Anglo-Saxon history as well as medieval history and this gives me a basis for teaching in the Viking History course. At Queen's University, as part of our graduate training, I was a teaching assistant in Medieval history, Holocaust history, and Women's Studies.”

She continues, “With AU, I provide instructional support for students in Roman History (Clas-Hist-Humn312), the History of Early Christianity (Hist-Hum-Rels313), History of WWII (Hist367), History of Science (Hist404), and occasionally provide alternative coverage in Viking History (Hist383). I am also a Tutor in Introduction to Women's Studies (WGST 266), and Violence Against Women (WGST422).”

Melanie provides an in-depth description into HIST 383, stating “This third-year course is a fantastic, dynamic, look at Viking history within the early medieval period (750-1100 C.E.) in Western History. Students are introduced to Scandinavian culture and traditions, including their tradition of going on 'Viking' voyages—travel and exploration by boat, as distinct from other medieval European cultures. By the end of the course students will come away with a more comprehensive understanding that Viking culture was distinct not only for their boat culture, the legacy of their creation stories and pantheon of supernatural gods that symbolized aspects of the natural world, but also for their farming and colonial settlements, their breadth of travel and establishment of trade routes, the structure of their family and society, and their storytelling and literacy illustrated in their poetic sagas. In my experience, while Viking mythologies fascinate us, students find that they have a new appreciation for the boldness, the aspirations, but also the daily realities of tribal, communal, and civic Scandinavian culture in the early medieval period and how lasting some of the legacies of that culture in our current language, our worldviews, our values and traditions continue to be.”

When asked to provide more in-depth information regarding the quizzes, assignments, and the final exam, she states “There are 3 written assignments, quizzes, and a written exam. The first assignment is a short Research Plan designed to help students choose a research topic and work out its structure and focus. Assignment 2 is an Article Review where students choose to provide an in-depth review of one of the articles they will use in their research paper. This assignment helps students engage with researching sources and showing their understanding of the research material. The first two assignments are short and help students build up to their research paper. Assignment 3 is the long research paper and students are expected to show development of content and analysis that incorporates at least one primary source, such as a saga, along with supporting secondary sources to help them present critical explanation and analysis about the historical context of their chosen topic. The exam tests students' cumulative course content knowledge so the assignments and the Study Questions and Unit and Course Objectives are designed to help students build a good set of study notes and practice questions for writing the

exam. Last, the quizzes are straightforward and designed to help introduce students to academic essay writing and research skills, so that they are more comfortable with the coursework and course content.”

Melanie believes that “students in these individually paced courses each have their own learning styles and their own schedules, so one thing all students need to do is determine what type of study schedule works best for them on a daily and weekly basis. For example, scheduling in a block of time (student's choice) each day for the course can then allow students to set aside time for reading, for study questions, for quizzes, for research and writing within each day's block of time for the course. Steadily working at the course in this way and breaking down coursework into manageable tasks will help manage student stress and provide a reliable structure for students to work with and adapt as needed.”

Each university course has content that some students will find more difficult than others and HIST 383 is no exception. Melanie explains that “Students sometimes struggle with reading historical evidence, like the sagas, because - even though students are reading modern English translations - the language and the ideas are still of another time and culture so it is not always easy to read or understand the primary evidence. However, most translations strive to make this more accessible and the course authors have designed the content to be relatable and easier for students to understand this historical culture. Students can always reach out to their Tutors as well for assistance with any questions and help with readings and assignments.”

Whether HIST 383 is a program or degree requirement of yours, or the topics discussed above are of interest to you, this course will have you learning a lot of interesting information surrounding the Vikings!

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



The Creative Spark! Make'em Giggle

Marie Well



“Do you want to stir smiles when you present your research? Make an audience burst into giggles at a planned pause? Have a happy crowd surround you after your speech, begging to know your speaking fees? Of course you do! Everyone wants a warm audience. But sometimes we face self-doubts: yes, the *what ifs* of doom. So, here are five *what ifs* answered to stir a whoopla from your crowd.

What if no-one laughs at your jokes? One friend of mine did stand-up and no one laughed. So he cursed the audience. To his surprise, the audience howled. He then laid insult after insult on the crowd and the room shook with laughter. It made a lasting impression on the comedian. So, if your audience doesn't laugh at your funnies, think of him.

But what if you feel ashamed about your on-stage appearance? At a disability film festival, I saw a comedy act performed by a guy with a disfigured face. He joked he didn't have bad hair days, just bad face days. I howled.

But he had a twinge of anger whenever the audience laughed. So, if, like me, you've got a third eye sticking out of your forehead, you've found your punchline.

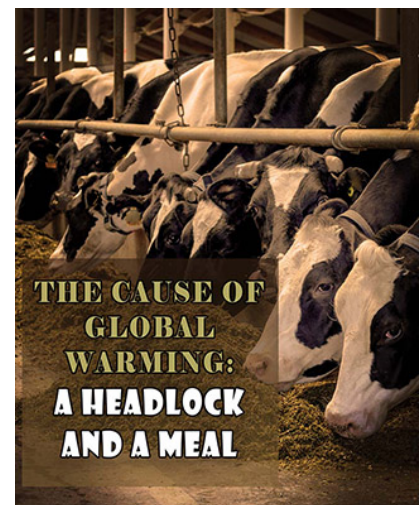
What if your humorous presentation gets an F? Well, Trump makes me howl. And he rounds up full stadiums with lineups stretched for miles. Despite this, celebrities, the media, and leftists hate him. The moral? To achieve more than most, you can't conform. So, picture Trump's foes should your crowd grow chilly.

What if your research has no aha moments or scientific breakthroughs? Resort to comedy! I love watching Ted Talks. I even toyed with the idea of doing a Ted Talk myself. But what if I have nothing novel to share? Well, the most watched Ted Talk relied on jokes—yet, in my opinion, said little. So, if your speech lacks highbrow, lift it with humor.

Or better yet, sprinkle in a formula revealed by Ramakrishna Reddy, author of *Connect Using Humor and Story: How I Got 18 Laughs 3 Applauses in a 7 Minute Persuasive Speech*:

- The formula for a funny speech consists of four parts: “Premise + Pause + Punch Line + Pause = Laughter” (p. 14 of 104, 16%).
- The premise is plain Jane: “The premise is the information needed for an audience to understand or appreciate the punchline ... The premise must be believable ... not be funny ... [but] create anticipation” (p. 15 of 104, 17%).
- Silence builds tension: “Pause 1 is needed to build tension. Pause 1 must ... be long enough to create tension” (p. 15 of 104, 17%).
- After the tense moments, pull the punch line: “Punch line ... is a word or phrase that follows the pause that triggers laughter” (p. 15 of 104, 17%).
- And a final silence relieves tension through laughter: “Pause 2 ... gives the audience time to laugh ... during this pause for laughter, you can get most out of it by using gestures or even a deadpan expression to maximize the effect” (p. 16 of 104, 19%).
- But how do you create the punchline? First find your topic.
- Then, find the attitude. In other words, answer the following four complaints and pick the most fitting answer:
 - “What is hard about it?
 - What is weird about it?
 - What is stupid about it?
 - What is scary about it?” (p. 20 of 104, 22%).
- After that, find your point of view. Point of view is the “reason why you are complaining” (p. 21 of 104, 23%).
- Then find the humor trigger “by highlighting the exact word or phrase that you think is having the funny quotient” (p. 21 of 104, 24%).

What if your life-changing idea won't stir laughter? Then, cap it with a funny image. As an example, I recently had an epiphany: the cure for global warming. As background, one Ted Talk claimed cow farts fuel global warming—more than oil and gas combined. But unhealthy diets (and antibiotics) give most anyone, especially cows, rotten farts. The solution? Let cows both graze healthier diets and roam. Global warming solved!



Dodging Christmas Dangers

Deanna Roney



The holiday season is descending. The neighbours have their lights up and decorations out. The stores are getting busier as people are starting to shop for those special someones in their lives. I like to start shopping and planning early; it is a part of the season that I enjoy. I like to take the time and think of something special to get for everyone. It pushes me to pause and consider what they would like, what have they talked about this year that they haven't, or won't, buy for themselves. It is a great feeling when you find that thing that is just right (and hopefully they agree!)

But, this time of year can be dangerous too. It can be too easy to overspend. To want to show love and gratitude through expense. This should not be the way it is –you should not go into debt to show those you love that you love them through elaborate gifts. They will know through the effort you put into them, through how you got or made them something.

One year when I was tight for cash I made a lot of my gifts. The one I made for my Dad was five frozen pies. The back story here is that he loves pie, hands down his favourite dessert, and one that doesn't get made very often. Usually just around the holidays. So, I made five different kinds of pie, included the baking

instructions on the ziplock bag and left the gift-wrapped box in the freezer until the morning of. And he loved it. It has probably been one of the best gifts I have given him.

When you are a student, or starting a new career, it can be hard to get ahead, and sometimes the holiday season seems to come at inopportune times, but there is no reason you can't enjoy the season. There is too much pressure these days to put a lot of money into gifts. And in recent years I have been able to go a bit more elaborate than five frozen pies in a box. But no year is more special than the next because of what the gift is.

It is important to consider what the holidays mean to you, maybe you dislike every aspect and do not celebrate. That is great if that is what you want to do.

For me, it is coming together with family: my brother comes home; we visit without distractions of technology; we make a way too large dinner and eat way too much of it; the dogs get fed some turkey because they're part of the family too; and we just enjoy each other's company. The holidays don't need the pressure that seems to be part of them in recent years. Just take a step back and reconsider what really matters this season. And do not overextend yourself! Honestly, your family wouldn't want you to.

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



Shopping Strategically for the Holidays

Xin Xu



The end to Halloween starts a new season that lasts approximately 1 month and 25 days. That's right—it's the season of shopping. For decades corporations have encouraged us to spend frivolously every day of the year, but particularly as the year draws to a close. But it's never a bad thing when we're shopping for others as opposed to ourselves, right? Unfortunately, with the age of rising credit card debt, we have created more problems whether we shop for ourselves or others. How do we circumvent this industry that perpetually tells us how to behave with our wallets? While you may not be able to eliminate spending habits completely, we certainly can make some strategic changes.

Set up a secret Santa within your family or group of friends.

Instead of buying gifts for everyone, you can selectively gift a meaningful present to your loved ones. Secret Santa is a memorable event for myself and my family because it creates conversations and stories without having to purchase gifts

for every cousin and uncle. The gifts you purchase are also more targeted toward the individual creating a sense of closeness rather than blindly selecting items for everyone.

Set a budget.

While it may be challenging to fit everything within the range of a number, I find that it forces me to be creative and to find value rather than the perfect gift. Having a budget means you're heading into the shopping season clear-headed and strategic.



Having received my younger cousin for Secret Santa, this was the only gift I had to purchase on Christmas in 2017

DIY instead of buy.

Last Christmas for Secret Santa among friends, I received a beautifully hand-painted trio of Christmas ornaments from a close friend. After inquiring the amount of time it took to create such a masterpiece to which she replied "15 minutes". I was flabbergasted. Even for someone who might be new at DIY gifts, there's unlimited inspiration and options on Instagram and Pinterest that could spark a new gift idea.

DIY hand-crafted ornaments from a friend.



DIY hand-crafted ornaments from a friend.

Shop online and start early.

If you have the perfect idea for someone, it's always smart to start looking for them early online. The prices are competitive, and you save yourself the

headache of running from store to store in person. You can also personalize your gifts online with custom design and printing. I found gems from browsing Etsy: handmade gifts that are unique and memorable.

Choose Memory over Materialism.

As a first-generation immigrant, I've witnessed the ways my parents kept Christmas a family-oriented event without having to give lavishly. In fact, some of my fondest memories have been baking Portuguese tarts with my family or going tobogganing at a nearby park.

Use a cash-back credit card.

If you must cave to the consumerism culture, there is no better way to do it than to get rewarded with particular credit cards. Certain credit cards provide features of cashback for every dollar you spend and other air mile perks that may help offset your spending.

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

Jody needs to take one more course and, to generate ideas, asks students what their most favourite AU course; responses are all over the course map. Stephanie wonders why so many students seek courses without exams; turns out there are many other students who prefer exams over essays any day.

Other posts include the LPN to RN bridging program, Bohemian Rhapsody for math students, APA style, and courses ENGL 380, ENTP 212, HLST 200, HRMT 326, PSYC 315, and PSYC 345.

Twitter

@AthabascaU tweets: "An important note for #AthabascaU students taking exams in December: <https://t.co/kF6hTt9rUy>."

@austudentsunion tweets: "Looking for some discounts on software? Check out Athabasca University on the Hub. <https://athabasca.onthehub.com>."

Youtube

Watch AU pres Neil Fassina with Portuguese subtitles in this video describing AU's technical cooperation agreement with LAIS: [LAIS assina acordo de cooperação técnica internacional com a Universidade da Athabasca](#).



Hot Tub Games and Christmas Anxiety

Dear Barb:

My husband and I have been friends with another couple for the past five years. We have traveled together and often hang out on the weekends. A few weeks ago we were all in our hot tub when Maureen took off her bathing suit top. I was totally shocked, but my husband seemed somewhat entertained by her actions, while Maureen's husband seemed to share my reaction. After a few awkward moments Maureen put her top back on, and nothing was mentioned for the rest of the evening. After they left, I talked to my husband who said "oh, it was nothing, she was just playing around." But I was upset by it, and we ended up in a big fight. We haven't seen them since. I am concerned about whether we should continue to socialize with them. My husband thinks I'm overreacting. What do you think? I think if we added some alcohol or weed to the situation, things could get out of hand. Shocked in B.C.

Dear Shocked:

I think your concerns are reasonable. Your friend probably was looking for a certain reaction, perhaps from the men. It might be a good idea to discuss this with her, as it was an inappropriate thing to do and I would be concerned what she might do next. Also, your husband's reaction seemed a bit strange as well. How would he feel if you were the one taking your top off? I would probably put a bit of distance in your relationship with this couple. Hope this helps.

Dear Barb:

Christmas is quickly approaching, and I feel the anxiety building. My family is stressing about who is going to do Christmas dinner and at whose house. I have tried to get my family to skip Christmas presents, since we are all adults, but they couldn't all agree. My younger sister still wants gifts as does my brother. My parents are older and living on a fixed income, so they really can't afford to buy gifts for everyone. I would like to keep my Christmas stress to a minimum this year; do you have any suggestions that I could use to stop the stress before it escalates? Thanks, Tammy.

Hey Tammy:

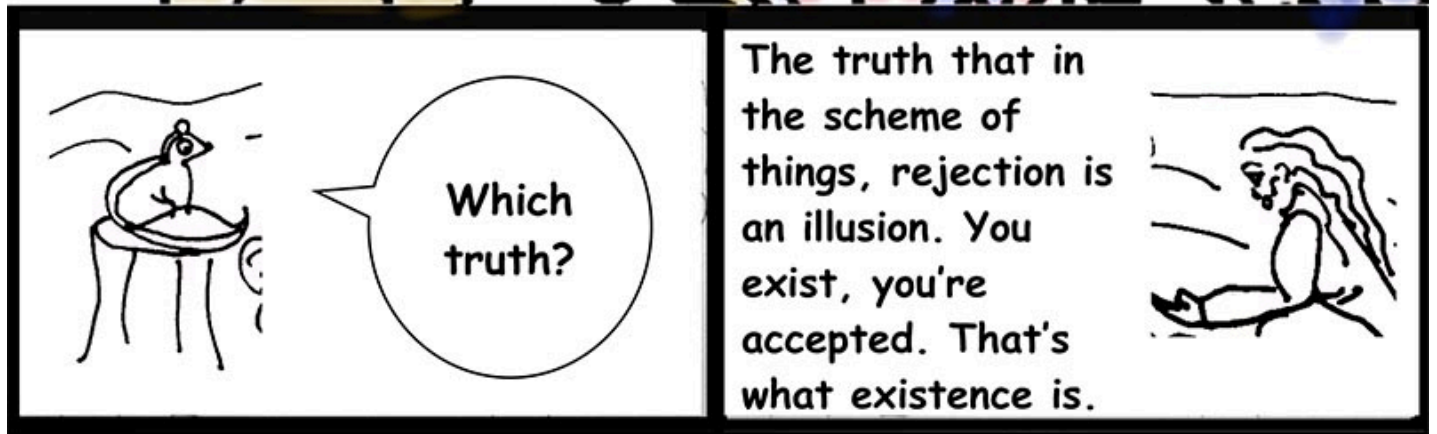
You're right about Christmas approaching way too quickly. Every year families stress out about the same things, and every year they end up doing the same thing over and over. To minimize your Christmas stress, you have to identify what is causing the stress and change that situation. For example, make gift giving easier by putting names in a hat and everyone choosing one, or alternate who will be hosting Christmas dinner: begin with the oldest sibling and each year move to the next. It looks like you're going to be the one who implements this initially. You will definitely meet some resistance but persevere and eventually everyone will realize their stress is reduced and they are enjoying the true meaning of Christmas, which is to get together with family. Merry Christmas Tammy.

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
Existence Precedes Acceptance

Wanda Waterman





AUSU
ATHABASCA UNIVERSITY
STUDENTS' UNION

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

IMPORTANT DATES

- **Dec 10:** [Deadline to register in a course starting Jan 1](#)
- **Dec 15:** [Jan degree requirements deadline](#)
- **Dec 24 – Jan 1 (inclusive):** [AUSU & AU office closure](#)
- **Jan 10:** [Deadline to register in a course starting Feb 1](#)
- **Jan 10:** [AUSU Council Meeting](#)
- **Jan 15:** [Feb degree requirements deadline](#)
- **Jan 15:** [Deadline to finish exams for course with Dec end](#)

AUSU Course Evaluations

Have you finished any courses in the past year?

We encourage all undergraduate students to fill out an [AUSU course evaluation](#) online after every course! Good feedback or not, we want to hear from you!

Why should you fill out an evaluation?

- Although your evaluation is anonymous, the results are compiled and available online [here](#). This information can help students choose their courses.
- The AUSU course evaluations are different than the ones sent out by AU – ours can be filled out anytime, even after your course is completed.
- The information we collect can be used to help advocate to the University on behalf of students for things like course content, materials, and instructional value!
- Evaluations are easily accessed and filled out online.

Fill out a course evaluation online [here](#).

If you have any feedback on how we can improve our course evaluations, please contact us at ausu@ausu.org.



Free Online Learning with Lynda.com/LinkedIn Learning

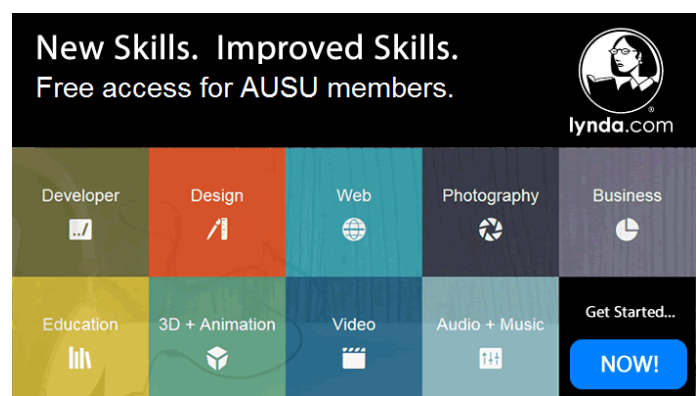
Did you know that AUSU provide a **FREE Lynda.com membership** for all AU undergraduates?

You can learn anything from Microsoft Office to computer programming, business and interview skills, digital media, photography, marketing, and more!

So far in the past year, there have been over 35,000 videos viewed by AUSU members! The most popular videos taken by AU students are:

- Programming Foundations
- Project Management Foundations
- Excel Essential Training
- JavaScript Essential Training
- HTML Essential Training
- Time Management Fundamentals
- C++ Essential Training
- SEO Foundations
- Preparing for the GMAT
- ...plus over 130 more popular video

To access your **FREE lynda.com** subscription visit the AUSU website [here](#).



CLASSIFIEDS

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

THE VOICE

301 Energy Square - 10109 - 106 St NW - Edmonton AB - T5J 3L7
Ph: 855.497.7003

Publisher	Athabasca University Students' Union
Editor-In-Chief	Jodi Campbell
Managing Editor	Karl Low

Regular Columnists Barb Godin, Scott Jacobsen, Carla Knipe, Barbara Lehtiniemi,
Tara Panrucker, Deanne Roney, Wanda Waterman, Xin Xu

www.voicemagazine.org

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

Contact *The Voice* at voice@voicemagazine.org.

To receive a weekly email announcing each issue, subscribe [here](#). *The Voice* does not share its subscriber list.

© 2018 by *The Voice Magazine*

ISSN 2561-3634