



THE VOICE

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BEST OF THE VOICE 2018



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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

Had a Happy Old Year!

Karl Low



Forty-nine issues. An average of 24 pages of articles and content per issue. With about 500 words per page. That's almost 600,000 words we published last year.

600,000 words poured out from the brains of fellow students and others within or from the AU community for you. Words created for your education, enjoyment, enlightenment, or even just to bring you a connection with others in the AU community.

So you can imagine that narrowing that down to get the "Best of the Voice 2018" is no easy task. And for those few of you students and others who diligently made the effort to dig through them all and find what you felt were the best, my endless appreciation.

For those of you who just remembered that one story that struck you and let me know, my thanks also go to you.

For everybody, though, this is the result. Thirty pages of content. Thirty pages of some of the most affecting, surprising, thought-provoking articles that writers from the AU community provided.

In here you'll also find articles emblematic of *The Voice Magazine* experience. As an example, I'll let you

in on a little secret: nobody actually voted for a Course Exam article, for instance. Yet, by the reader counts we have, the Course Exam articles are consistently among the most popular articles we publish in *The Voice Magazine*. Is it really the Best of The Voice? Well, even if you don't necessarily remember it above some of the other great writing we have, it's obviously part of what draws people to The Voice, so could I really do a Best of the Voice, showcasing what we're all about, without one? Of course not.

All of which means what you'll get here is not just The Best of the Voice in 2018, but the best of the Voice experience. That's part of why I like to start each year off with one of these. If someone's looking to see what *The Voice Magazine* is all about, these issues are a great place to point them to.

Of course, I couldn't resist but add a little commentary to each pick, giving you some background information about when we published it and why it's been included. I'm quite confident that you'll find all the choices this year deserve to be here, but if you still think there's something I missed, let me know. After all, nothing says there can't be a quick list of honorable mentions next issue.

Until then though, enjoy the read. I certainly did!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Karl", with a stylized, flowing script.

MINDS WE MEET



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

What are you studying at AU?

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

Did you go to post-secondary prior to AU?

Oh, this is a fun question. Yes and no. When I was 17/18 I was a student at the U of C. I was there on several scholarships and determined to pursue a degree in sociology. I decided in all of my 17 years that I was grown up and at the same time as starting university I should move out. Also, I determined that I needed my own one-bedroom apartment, not a studio, not a basement suite and not in residency. Huge mistake. Apartments mean rent, so then I needed a full-time job. You can see where this is going I'm sure, I had six courses I was registered in, worked 40 hours a week and at the same time testing the boundaries of my new-found freedom and independence.

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

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

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

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

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

What are your academic goals for 2018?

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

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

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

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

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

Where do you see yourself in 5 years?

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

What is the last book you read?

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

What show do you think everyone should binge watch?

I binge watch *Scrubs* and *Friends* and *Grey's Anatomy*. Repeatedly. It drives my husband crazy because I keep restarting them over and over and although it's clear I've seen them all, I love

them, and I'm not sure I'd ever tire of them. The people who haven't seen *Scrubs*? I mean, come on. Hilarious.

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

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

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

How do you make cold winter days more enjoyable?

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

Laura Nelson is a marketing analyst by day and a bibliophile by night. She is in her final stages of completing her BA with a major in English through AU.

[While we did a few student interviews this year, this one caught the attention of students because of the similarity with many of our stories – AU is often a plan B for people who've found their first choice (of career, of school, etc) didn't work out as expected.]



From Murder to Meaning

Tania Parker



Photo by Katalin Karolyi

The power of one moment, one word.

The moment: Easter Monday, 1978. The moment Margot Van Sluytman's father was murdered while attempting to stop an armed robbery.

The word: *sawbonna*. A Zulu greeting that translates to "I see you". To see our shared humanity, the goodness in one another, our fragility. The way Van Sluytman now sees her father's murderer.

After the tragic loss of her father, and an attempt to join him, Van Sluytman turned to the therapeutic power of words, using poetry and writing to free herself from behind her invisible bars. Finding her

niche, she went on to launch a publishing company, Palabras Press, published several books, and accepted an award from the National Association for Poetry Therapy for her work.

It was around this time when Van Sluytman and her father's murderer, released from prison as a transformed man dedicated to rehabilitation work within his community, began to share words,

eventually stumbling into moments. Moments that transform *sawbonna* from a simple word into a living framework in which to view humanity even after the most devastating of nightmares.

Today, Van Sluytman's life work is dedicated to The Sawbonna Project: transforming the culture of justice through the shared healing of both victim and offender, through respect, responsibility, and relationship. She accomplishes this by not just talking the talk—she walks the walk, right alongside her father's murderer. Together, they speak about restorative justice at schools and in jails. Together, they are the shared voice of reconciliation. Of restoration. Of *sawbonna*.

And now this moment: AU has awarded Van Sluytman, an MA-IS graduate, with the 2018 Distinguished Alumni Award: a formal recognition of the honour and prestige that her notable contributions to humanity brings to the University.

Margot has generously accepted my request for an email interview, where she discusses her serendipitous path to AU, her reaction to winning the Award, and how AU has fit into her overall vision.

What brought you to choose AU to pursue your MA-IS, especially over a brick and mortar university?

I chose AU because for years I had been looking for a Graduate Program that spoke to my pressing yearning for a program that would be interdisciplinary and inclusive of "mature" students. I also wanted my studies and research to be done via distance education where I could run my publishing press, continue to offer my courses and talks about Therapeutic Writing and Social Justice around the world, and be able to study within my schedule. I could study anywhere, not curtailed by the time-zones. My in-depth research about AU proved inspiring. MA-IS underscored for me that it was "bricks and mortar" of the very essence of quality, commitment, and support to its students. A truly precious story that made me know beyond the shadow of a doubt that AU was for me, was a powerfully auspicious meeting that happened in Portland, Oregon, in April 2007. I was there to present a workshop and to receive an award from The National Association for Poetry Therapy, for my Therapeutic Writing Courses and Publication, *Dance With Your Healing: Tears Let Me Begin to Speak*. The then President, Dr. Perie Longo, introduced me to Dr. Reinekke Lengelle. Dr. Lengelle and I were the only Canadians (both from Alberta at that time) at that conference of several hundred people from around the Globe. Our work with and for and because of Therapeutic Writing and how it permits "voice" and "agency", was a poignantly shared-passion. When I told her about my desire to engage in Graduate Studies, she told me about AU. She is one of the gifted and committed professors at AU with whom I eventually studied.

In your master's thesis, you had mentioned your belief in being the change you wished to see in the world. It is beautiful to see someone act toward this belief as you do. How do you feel that AU has helped you in the journey towards being the change?

Three names among a rich and inspiring list stand out for me when I think of the most potent mentors in my AU journey. Dr. Paul Nonnekes, Dr. Dale Dewhurst, Dr. Carolyn Redl. My first teacher was Dr. Nonnekes. By class three, I was ready to "quit." The reason was that I was overwhelmed with excitement. I commented on everything, often my linking my comments and responses to *sawbonna*. Other students challenged me about this, asking why I always told "my" story. Rather than respect and treasure their voices, I felt scared, threatened, embarrassed. Paul said to me, "I will be disappointed in you if you quit." Why did this matter to me? It mattered because what Paul knew and what he taught us, was that learning is about being challenged, is about asking and being asked abundant questions, and learning how to respond with and from and because of the intellect of the heart—the heart of the intellect. His cancer diagnosis during our course left me and my classmates deeply, deeply saddened. His death was a blow to his

students and colleagues. His wisdom of, "Do not quit. Honour the gift that education is," ie. discourses of all manner, will stay with me as another treasure from AU. Drs. Dewhurst and Redl, my co-thesis supervisors remain the very light at the tunnel of my commitment to *sawbonna*. Carolyn supported and trained me in the use of my research methodology: autoethnography. She compelled me to write with vigour, with vision, with courage, with precision, and with focus, so that this methodology, one that is as yet challenged, will be seen for the academic rigour that is insisted upon—a rigour that demands clarity and that stands shoulder-to-shoulder with all others.

The one time we met in Edmonton, Dale's words, "You have stumbled upon a new justice theory with *sawbonna*," were, and are, the very essence of my daily life's compulsion for, and commitment to, affect change in Canada's justice policy. Dale's encouragement to me to write a thesis that would do what I wanted it to do, that which it is still doing, "Affect the heart of the intellect of those in political power," compelled me to write, write, write, re-write, re-write, re-write, so that I could hone in on the foundational essence of *sawbonna*. His other words to me, "Use the word *sawbonna* everywhere." I do.

How can we, as distance education students from around the world and from different perspectives of life (including those that study at AU while incarcerated) incorporate *sawbonna* into our lives?

Sawbonna means shared-humanity. The simple phrase, "I see you." To incorporate it in all that we do is to be present to our very self first, so that we come to know our voice of love, which is the essential voice of justice. In those moments during my studies, when I was feeling "out of my league," "useless," "too, too tired," or "unworthy" of even putting pen to paper, I reminded myself that *sawbonna* starts from my heart of kindness with myself and works outward from there. That each student knows they matter, is vital. Even as AU is not the tradition of "bricks and mortar," it is the traditional act of teaching and learning that attests to exquisite learning, whereby the intellect of the heart infuses a desire to thrive. And, AU is the non-traditional of courage in the very act of making exquisite learning available around the Globe. Students and professors are always near. *Sawbonna* is about relationship. AU is about relationship. We are seen. We matter.

What was your reaction when you learned you'll be receiving the 2018 Distinguished Alumni Award?

Tears. Awe. Gratitude. I was in the car with my brother, Jeremy, who was visiting from overseas. The phone rang and he pulled over and asked, "What's up, Marg?" I suspect on my face he saw an expression of, "What? Me? No way!" The reason for this, now that I have had time to digest, is the fact that from the time my Dad, Theodore, was murdered, when I was a girl of 16, to now, a woman of 56, I have been walking a tight-rope dance of creating and finding meaning. My one constant has been reading, writing, research, and curiosity about how learning, how education can be a force for change, for "meaning-making." Discovering AU was as if discovering a vein of pure gold. My seeming severed vocal cords found a way to voice again. AU has twice-blessed me.

What advice can you give to aspiring future alumni?

Always remember, particularly in those moments when you feel too, too tired, incapable, unworthy, that you are the very voice of hope, justice, freedom, and creative-fire that the learning at AU inspires you savour. "Don't quit!" *Sawbonna*!

I, for one, hold my head up a little higher as an AU student, honoured to be alongside someone as strong and admirable as Margot Van Sluytman.

Congratulations, Margot!

Tania is a 30-something career BHRLR student currently averaging one course per year, aka a "lifelong learner" (or lifelong procrastinator).

[This article generated a lot of buzz when it was first released at the beginning of October, so it's no surprise that students picked it for the Best of edition. A solid interview and a compelling story, of course it's here.]

Mary's Story

Barb Godin



On July 22, 2017, my sister passed away. She was only thirteen months older than me. I wrote about Marion (Mary) in a previous issue of *The Voice Magazine*.

Mary and I spent part of our childhood together. She was my closest sibling, and I always felt we were a part of each other. I was connected to Mary in a way that I wasn't with my other siblings, or even my parents. We shared the pain of being born into a family where we felt totally unwanted and experienced abuse and neglect.

As teenagers, Mary and I were involved in a deadly car accident where a friend was killed. Mary sustained a traumatic brain injury and numerous other injuries including a broken leg and pelvis. My injuries were minimal. The brain injury changed Mary and our relationship forever. I tried many times over the years to reconnect with her but it was always strained. We grew more distant, only writing at Christmas or birthdays. We both married and had children, but our families hardly knew each other.

During the last five years of Mary's life things changed again and we began to talk more. I soon began to realize how ill Mary was, both physically and mentally. I was shocked to see the transformation from the last time I had seen her. She had no teeth, did not wear dentures, and was extremely thin. Her spine was twisted with osteoporosis, making it impossible for her to stand straight. She often lost her balance and fell, usually hitting her head.

My heart ached for Mary. I hated the pain she was living with and I wanted her life to be better. She weighed between 75 and 80 pounds and her diet consisted mainly of cheerios, peanut butter, diet coke and black coffee which she ordered from the neighborhood convenience store since they delivered. She slept 18 hours a day. If I called her before 7 or 8 in the evening she was in such a deep sleep that her phone would ring so long that the operator came on. Her mental state continued to deteriorate. She was irrational and suffered from temporal lobe seizures and rages.

The osteoporosis had been brought on because the medication she was taking for seizures had depleted her bones of calcium. It could have been prevented if her doctor had put her on calcium supplements, but neither Mary's doctor nor the pharmacist told her this was a side effect. In fact, the situation only came to the doctor's attention when our older sister took Mary for a doctor's appointment and mentioned the curvature in her back. She was sent for a bone density test and the diagnosis was made, and then she was prescribed calcium supplements. Mary took the



medication, but she refused to accept that she had osteoporosis, nor would she agree to use a walker or cane to help with her balance.

Following a fall and a visit to the hospital, the hospital refused to discharge her unless she agreed to use a walker. She agreed, reluctantly, but two days after leaving the hospital she called the pharmacy and told them to pick up the walker, sitting outside her apartment door. I tried to convince her to keep it but her response was "I'm only a year older than you and you don't have one."

Mary's mental illness was extremely frustrating. She saw everyone as a threat. She told me people were coming into her apartment and stealing her cigarettes and diet coke, and leaving notes for her that she would find posted on her fridge. I tried to explain to her that no one could get in with her door locked and the chain and knives across it. She was convinced we were trying to put her in a home, when, in reality, we were trying to get her some help to improve her life.

One evening, after we talked on the phone and had a good conversation, or so I thought, she reported me to the police. I was awakened at midnight to the sound of my phone ringing. The police officer on the other end of the line said he had received a complaint from Mary that I had been harassing her. She regularly blocked my number and I was not able to call her for months. Then, out of the blue, she would call and ask why I had blocked her. I was angry, frustrated, and almost ready to give up. During her lucid times we talked about the pain and betrayal we felt from being abandoned by our parents. We knew how each other felt and I made the decision to always be there for Mary. Every time I spoke to her, she asked me to tell her daughter that she loved her and I promised her that I would. At times I believed I was reaching her and that she was ready to accept help, but she never did.

I had not physically seen Mary for two years before her death, but I knew she was getting worse when she told me her physical symptoms. She described cuts and bruises she had gotten from falling and said that her fingers and toes were black. She said everything she ate went right through her and left her toilet full of blood. I feared for her and made her promise to tell her social worker. At times family members had contacted her doctor and social worker, but with the privacy laws, there was nothing anyone could do without Mary agreeing to accept help. I lived in another city a two-hour drive away and when we made plans to visit, she always cancelled. Eventually her children, grandchildren, and our other sister grew tired and frustrated from the abusive rages she'd direct toward them and they stopped contacting her.

The last time I talked to her was in June 2017, six weeks before she died. We had a great conversation and made plans for me to visit the next week. I went shopping and purchased a few items to bring for our visit. The day before the visit, I called, and a recording came on: "this person is not accepting calls from you at the present time." I called on my cell phone and she seemed confused as to how I was able to call her. She cancelled our visit and banged the phone down. I decided to give it a few weeks and call her again, but that would never happen.

A couple of weeks later we went camping for the weekend. On Friday afternoon, after parking and setting up our camper, I received a call from Mary's social worker, Nadia. She said that Mary had been admitted to the hospital with pneumonia. Nadia said Mary was not doing well and she had lost more weight, and her mental and physical health were getting worse. She said that we needed to get together as a family and have Mary moved into to an assisted living facility, because the hospital might decide to only release if she went into an assisted living facility. But if the hospital chose to release her on her own, our next step was to go before a judge and have her declared incapable of taking care of herself. We did not want to take Mary's independence away, but it seemed there was no other option as she was getting worse. We decided that if the hospital

sent her home we would begin the legal proceeding immediately. On Saturday morning I called the hospital from the campground, hoping to be able to talk to Mary, but they said she had been discharged. I was surprised, but, in a way, I was relieved that they felt she was well enough to be released.

Two days later when I returned home Mary's social worker called and told me that Mary had passed away. I was confused and thought she must be mistaken. Nadia said the hospital had misinformed me and Mary had never been discharged, She died a few hours after being admitted as a result of the pneumonia. Mary had no one listed as next of kin; therefore no one was informed of her passing. She died all alone in a hospital bed with no one by her side. My heart broke for her having to spend the last minutes of life alone. I didn't want this horrible end for Mary. I wanted to be with her, to help her heal the pain. My chest felt tight, I did not want to breathe in this reality. My eyes burned with tears.

A part of me died that day with my sister. I think about her every day and wonder why she had to live such a tortured life. She was a menace to herself and the only people who could help her, let her down. Her doctors, social workers and family should have been able to save Mary from herself, but because of the mental health act, there was nothing anyone could do without her consent. Mary was never able to find peace while alive. Happiness came to her only in glimpses.

Barbara Godin is a graduate of AU and writes the "Dear Barb" column. She lives in London, Ontario with her husband and their two dogs.



[Receiving the most votes of any of the "Best of" articles, Mary's Story was first published in early January, and is a continuation of an article first published in 2015! As we enter our 27th year, this is emblematic of the long and varied history of student writing in The Voice Magazine]

Survival in the Garret 13 Grooming Tips for Frugal Students

Wanda Waterman



Once again, the bohemian community extends a helping hand to students struggling to survive on a shoestring. And really, who can better provide you with sound money management advice than those chronically low on funds? And who better to teach you about grooming than vain artists, always striving to appear interesting and appealing, developing their personal "brands" on next to no money? Here's today's advice:

1. We've said it before, but it bears repeating—just let your hair grow. You'll save a heap on salons and barbers, and you'll need never waste another minute worrying about how you're going to fit your next haircut into a crammed schedule. And whenever you need a neat, professional look, you can just put it in a bun or a ponytail.

2. If long hair just isn't your look, search for one of those small, cramped, dirty shops where the proprietor does everything from answering the phone to cutting hair and

sweeping up afterwards. The price will always be lower. Explain clearly what you want. If they get it right the first time, that's your man. Or gal.

Even better, get a “haircut buddy” and give each other regular free haircuts.

3. Want your hair to look shiny and full? Deep condition with an egg yolk, two tablespoons of olive oil, and two tablespoons of honey. Mix well and spread lightly through your hair, leaving it for at least an hour (one batch is good for three or four shampoos). Wash it out with shampoo or with dishwashing liquid diluted with lemon juice.
4. For smooth, clean skin ignore the fancy schmancy personal cleaning products. Pick up the cheapest soaps and a pair of exfoliating gloves (just be careful where you use them). For some reason liquid hand soap is substantially cheaper than liquid shower gel, but soap is soap, so if you’re a liquid soap person, buy hand soap in bulk.
5. Make sure you pick the right deodorant, because “all the perfumes of Arabia will not sweeten” the offensive quality of a deadbeat deodorant. If they don’t give you a rash, crystal deodorants—really just blocks of mineral salts—are highly effective. An expensive investment at first, but they last so long they end up practically paying for themselves.
6. If you have any togs that need ironing, fold them carefully and weight them down under heavy items like suitcases filled with old encyclopedia volumes.



7. The cosmetic industry makes millions selling us on creams and lotions that are supposed to keep us young. Don’t be one of those suckers born every minute. The only cream that prevents aging is sunscreen, and the only sunscreens that work properly are those that contain either zinc oxide, titanium oxide, or both. Get in the habit of wearing sunscreen on your face every day, even in winter, and keep that smooth complexion into your sixties and even beyond.

8. Shaving? The beauty business also manages to make a lot of money from exfoliating products, but where did the idea for exfoliating originate? Someone noticing how baby’s-butt smooth a man’s face feels after a razor shave. So, gents, if you do decide to let go of that cute little hedgehog growing on your chin, don’t invest in an electric shaver. Use razors, and your skin will thank you.

Ladies can also benefit from an old-fashioned exfoliating every so often. Just lather your face up well and shave the lather off. (But don’t get caught or people might start saying you’re secretly a troll.) And don’t forget to moisturise.

9. As for moisturiser, petroleum jelly works wonders for very little cost, but if you don’t like the idea of smearing a petroleum product on your face, fork out a little extra for shea butter. You don’t need much.



10. If you use scent, use it on clothing items that don’t get washed as often as you wash yourself.



11. A well made-up face can make plain clothes look posh. If you visit the cosmetics counter remember that if you purchase the more expensive items you're just paying for fancy packaging and upscale marketing. Get to know the less expensive brands. Also, a wonderful business in New York, e.l.f., is dedicated to selling good makeup online at rock-bottom prices.

12. Don't waste a thing. Remember that toothpaste need not be applied to the brush in an amount any larger than a pea.

13. Ignore the shampoo-makers mandate to wash twice. One lather is enough. Just rinse well afterwards.

14. For those paying for their own electricity, showering with cold water all summer will cut down on your bills. May also help frisky types control their wayward urges.



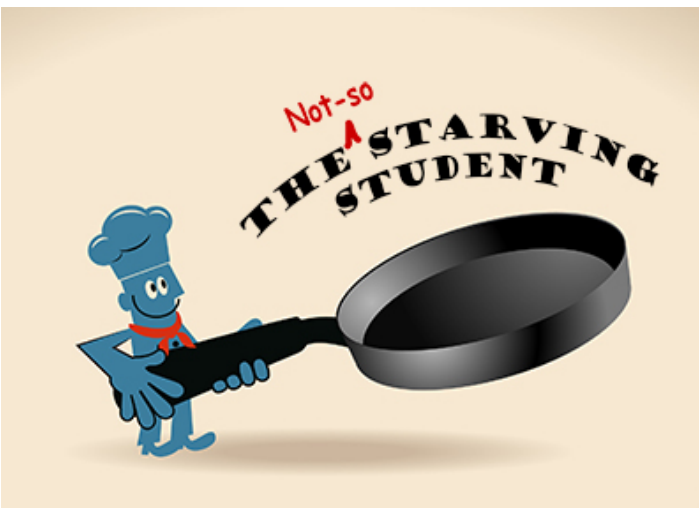
Wanda also writes the blog *The Mindful Bard: The Care and Feeding of the Creative Self*.

[I always appreciate sly and dry humour, so the "Survival in the Garrett" series is a favorite of mine. This one, from early March was probably picked by students for the combination of solid advice juxtaposed with the quiet humour of the photos.]



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

[You'd think a food column would have been a no-brainer for The Voice Magazine, but The Not-So Starving Student didn't start until June of 2017. This installment was published mid-March of last year, and as noted by one student voter, "New Year is a good time to resolve to try these simple methods for your own 'grow op'." I couldn't agree more.]

The Study Dude

Campus Universities vs. AU

Marie Well



I hate to break the news, but campus-based universities have legs-up over online ones. At least, that's true for the 20-year-olds who bask in drama and who don't get plumber's butt in low-rise jeans.

So, how do campus-based universities compare to AU? Well, if you ask me, both better and worse.

The key benefit to on-campus universities is clout. When I'd tell employers I scored top grades in math, they grilled me, "Which school?" When I mentioned an on-campus university, they'd ease back into their chairs, eyebrows lifting as slow smiles spread.

Campus-based universities also limit what you need to learn. You see, campus profs tip you off on what you need to study. That hasn't been my experience at AU. At AU, I got assigned a textbook with a billion pages. I could've used it as a dinner table—for the United Nations. Study that without a peep from your prof!

But on the bright side, AU relies on textbooks while campus universities zero mostly in on lectures. In other

words, miss a lecture at a campus university, and burn at the stake test time.

My biggest issue with AU is the outdated textbooks. Try learning social media or programming from books a thousand years old. What kind of education is that? Programs like Coursera make more sense if you want to learn something applicable to the 21st century.

The biggest edge campus schools have is grad studies. Campus universities shovel cash into your wallet. During graduate studies at a campus university, I won a scholarship for \$24,000. I then won another one for a similar amount. But they only let me keep one. I also secured a graduate teaching assistant role for over \$5000. When my scholarship cash ran out, I paid \$400 a month from my fulltime job. Twice I could barely afford rent. But wow did I dine and shop clothing. The purple-haired dean labeled my wardrobe most enviable.

But campus universities have downsides. For one, older students have harder times fitting in. They start off as misfits—as targets. That is, unless they look like George Clooney with the personality of Dalai Lama. Even then, they spend their weekends skiing with profs, not schoolmates. But online, they can upload their grade two pic and no-one would be the wiser.

And at campus universities, keeping up with fashions proves humbling. When I was on campus, low rise jeans came back into style. So, I slipped them on with my paunch hanging over my belt. And don't do as I did by bleaching your hair into raccoon-streaks. One friend joked my next salon-trek would yield a skunk.

But the worst part about physical universities is the social drama. Young people don't have fully developed amygdalae—the emotion centers of the brain. So, gossip, backstabbing, and bullying abound. A day in the dorm feels like a librarian's re-enactment of Jason from Friday the 13th.

The best part of AU over campus universities? You can work-at-your-own-pace. Setting your own schedule fits well with busy lifestyles—and frees you of stinky buses and steroid-induced parking fees.

So, which is best: campus universities or AU? They both have their ups and downs, but if you prefer to laze about in your PJs, eat Domino's pizza, and submit assignments at your leisure, plumber's butt is not a bad thing after all. Besides, who really cares what George Clooney thinks?

[Comparisons between "Us" and "Them" are always a popular thing, and one of the ways that The Voice Magazine compares to traditional student newspapers is that, like AU, people can be with us for a very long time, giving us a chance to see how their style and thinking evolves over time. The Study Dude has been a long-standing column with The Voice Magazine, but this particular article, not only being a great comparison between AU and campus based universities, is a change from Marie Wells usual style. That change is emblematic of the Voice, and part of why it's here in The Best of issue]



Many Small Steps on the Path to Truth and Reconciliation Barbara Lehtiniemi A Personal Journey



"We live on an island surrounded by a sea of ignorance. As our island of knowledge grows, so does the shore of our ignorance." — John Archibald Wheeler (1911-2008), American theoretical physicist.

Should every university program require mandatory indigenous-content courses? That's a question I pondered in 2016 after reading Tamra Ross's article, "Truth and Reconciliation—Will Your Next University Program Have a First Nations' Content Requirement?" (*The Voice Magazine*, February 19, 2016). In that article, Tamra discussed a motion put forward by the student union at the University of Saskatchewan (USSU), calling on that university to incorporate indigenous content into every program.

The USSU request was inspired by the 2015 "Call to Action" report from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC). The TRC's purpose is to "redress the legacy of residential schools and advance the process of Canadian reconciliation." In the section on "Education for Reconciliation" the report calls upon educators to "integrate Indigenous knowledge and teaching methods into classrooms" as well as build "student capacity for

intercultural understand, empathy, and mutual respect."

By the end of 2016, two Canadian post-secondary institutions, Lakehead University in Ontario and the University of Winnipeg in Manitoba, had taken the initiative and implemented a requirement for new students to include indigenous course content in their programs. In 2017, a third institution, Trent University in Ontario, also instituted mandatory indigenous content.

Other universities are contemplating similar changes. University of Saskatchewan, for example, announced in 2016 it was planning to institute mandatory indigenous content in its programs but has not moved to implementation yet. Other institutions are likewise in the planning stages or have partially implemented mandatory indigenous content for some programs only.

AU has not yet announced a plan for mandatory indigenous content. However, one doesn't have to wait for something to be mandatory to recognize the value of it. Truth and Reconciliation is something we can all participate in. Every step we take toward understanding gets us closer to overcoming the challenges of a complex issue. The more we know, the more we grow.

In 2017, I decided to make my first individual step toward Truth and Reconciliation by enrolling in an Indigenous Studies (INST) course at AU. Up until that time, I had not even considered any of the INST course offerings.

AU offers twenty-three INST courses at the undergrad level. *Indigenous Studies I* (INST 203) seemed like the obvious place to start, but I had fulfilled all my junior-level course requirements. There were many senior-level courses to choose from and, after narrowing it down to three, I decided on *History of Canada's First Nations to 1830* (INST 368).

I have an avid interest in Canadian History. I consider myself reasonably well-read on the subject and fairly knowledgeable, but I recognized that there were gaps in my knowledge and would have described my awareness of First Nations' history as only "fair".

That turns out to be an overstatement.

Aristotle said, "The more you know, the more you know you don't know." That sums up my feelings as I worked through the course. I'd had no idea how much I didn't know. Now I know that what I *do know* is still only a small fraction of what I *ought to know*.

History of Canada's First Nations to 1830 covers a lot of ground. The first third of the course focuses on First Nations before European contact. There were no borders then and the course acknowledges that by covering First Nations in all of what we now call North and South America. The second third of the course covers the initial period of contact and how various First Nations dealt with Europeans arriving on their doorsteps. The final third of the course covers the increasing pressure European settlers and policies put on First Nations.

Does my taking this one course change anything? Does this represent even a fraction of a step in the Truth and Reconciliation journey? What I can say for certain is that it is not a step backward.

Taking this course increased my knowledge of First Nations' history exponentially (although nowhere near exhaustively.) More importantly, it increased my awareness of how we got to where we are today, with a complex mess that was centuries in the making. That doesn't solve anything by itself. But you have to start with the *truth* to get to the *reconciliation*. All journeys begin with one step forward.

I'm not indigenous, and I don't claim to speak for anyone indigenous or otherwise. I speak with my own voice.

I believe we're all part of the bigger picture. And every action (or non-action) contributes to the result.

I believe charting a course for our future is predicated on knowing our past.

I believe if enough people care enough to seek truth, we'll eventually accomplish reconciliation.

Residential schools were not just an isolated incident. It's not just a matter of saying, "Oops, sorry!" without a fundamental change in thinking. The legacy of the residential school program may

have been the catalyst for the TRC but residential schools were just one example of disastrous policies in a long line of such tragedies.

The TRC's Call to Action is also a call for a change in attitude. And that's not up to the government or a committee or God Almighty. It's up to every one of us. If everyone is taking small steps on the path to reconciliation then society as a whole will be propelled forward toward the country we claim we want to have.

So to the question about mandatory indigenous content in university programs. There are proponents and opponents in both indigenous and non-indigenous communities for such a plan. But it's so easy to get bogged down in the debate instead of taking action.

My answer is that I don't think we need a university or a prime minister to tell us that "We have to do better." The truth is, we can all choose to do better without being told.

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

[This article from February is both a favorite pick of mine, as well as receiving some student votes. It's one of my favorites because of how it takes an honest look at an important issue in Canada, and, like most things that are honest, doesn't leave us with any easy solutions.]



The Fly on the Wall Back to School Inspiration—Athabasca Style!

Jason Sullivan



"Ok, listen up! Everyone take off their shoes and put them on the table." Are we in a post 9/11 airport? Nope, it's the first day of art class and the student body is being asked as one to draw their own shoe. Inspiration drains away like chlorophyll from autumn leaves with the forced return of students to the flattening malaise of rigour and ritual wrought by institutionalized education. We AU savants aren't immune to the busywork of courses but at least we do it how, when, and where we want. We may miss out on personal interactions with course-mates but at least we learn in our own way; it helps to remember the tension and challenges that

we are liberated from as we return to, or continue, our distance education this fall.

A peculiar energy envelops students during their first moments in a new classroom, like being plunked into a hive of bees only to realize that we're all bees too. So much uncertainty! What will the instructor be like: strict, strident, charismatic? And what of the other students; will they be friends, bullies, soul mates? At AU we generally miss out on the concrete tangible components of classroom life. Yet, our inspiration is intact and even expanded because we are *here* in our cyber classroom largely of our own volition. Our freedom of choice has brought us back to school in a special way; being *at* AU can be like having a secret agent identity or inhabiting an alternate universe. Social circumstances fall away and we learn face to face with the material; the personality of our tutor matters less than their efficacy in assisting our process.

As such, back to school sensations do exist in a distance setting. Many courses mandatory to complete our major can be pretty intimidating. And there's no study buddy sitting with us to compare notes or maybe even to copy answers from. What we get from AU is pretty much what we put in; it all falls to us.

Martin Heidegger utilizes the term *verfallen* as a way of thinking of cause and effect: effects fall from causes such as for our graduation to fall into place we must take various core courses; our success falls from applying ourselves and leads to the effect of success. We stand and fall on our own at AU. In this way, for Heidegger, living authentically sounds very much like being a distance student. He uses the term *Das Man* ('The They') to refer to the socio-cultural superstructure in which we are embedded in brick and mortar educational settings.

"It is the-they which informs us, implicitly or explicitly, what is to be done and how it is to be done. The influence of the-they comes through (or is disclosed) when Dasein does what one does, such as when a workman hammers the way one hammers; or when a person drinks tea the way one drinks tea; or when somebody is shocked, delighted or appalled by what one is shocked, delighted, appalled by. Yet to act merely by virtue of the perceived injunctions of the-they runs the risk of what Heidegger calls 'inauthenticity' (Uneigentlich)." (Royle).

Classrooms being the pressure cookers they are, we at AU may benefit from the absence of *Das Man*. Things that seem to matter in a classroom (fashion, television shows, tech gadgets) easily take on a life of their own and can lead us away from seeing the big picture of our own academic inspiration as it unfolds. This ubiquitous *The They* can insidiously enter every fibre of our being.

Collective social environments bring further challenges. Certainly, classrooms can at times feel a bit like noxious war zones. With this in mind we might recall the Canadian folk singer Buffy St Marie who once decried the tendency of people to join wars en masse. She sang:

*"he knows he shouldn't kill and he knows he always will kill
You'll for me my friend and me for you"* (St. Marie).

School cliques and in-groups with their conflicts and peer pressure have these elements, but happily AU allows our return to school to remain focused on academic matters. We do still have to manage our personal lives, but we typically have more control over those since we choose who constitutes our friend group and family unit. If we don't like someone it doesn't have to be a battle; they can be unfriended and ignored rather than seen in class for the rest of a semester. In my experience online forums have been respectful, caring, and not fraught with the drama of more traditional settings. After all, we're here to learn and glean wisdom from one another at AU!

The proverbial violence of classroom relations can also be tinged with power because of group-think. When most or all students have a particular political or social view, such as dominate in disciplines ranging from physics to psychology, it can be difficult to chart an independent or creative course. The weight of convention easily breeds conformity and the overarching power of *The They* translates into a powerful *We*. Perhaps a certain nursery rhyme (twisted Fly on the Wall-style) applies:

*"This little pronoun went to market
This little pronoun stayed home
This little pronoun had roast beef, this little pronoun had none.
And this little pronoun went WE WE WE all the way home"*

Preoccupation with what others think (*the We* if you will) and what constitutes a socially approved *right answer* can make classroom courses an exercise less in learning new things than in learning how to demonstrate fidelity to the professor's viewpoint, or the classroom consensus, or both. As the old farming phrase goes *the tallest weed in the field is always the first to be hacked down*. Sometimes, in a typical classroom, it doesn't pay to express our true beliefs on a given topic, but at AU we can write our essays and interact with our tutors free of the peanut gallery of our peers.

Forums are similar: others are willing to hear differing viewpoints and, even if not in agreement, we all have bigger fish to fry than engaging in egoistic peeing-matches so notorious in classroom settings dominated by a few loudmouths. In our forums, students are respectful and earnest rather than *playing to an audience*. This may be because the key audience we are trying to impress and gain respect from is ourselves and our future selves who we wish to become as we proceed through our educational journey.

But is it all serious pedagogical business during back to school season? By some accounts school is supposed to be fun! But not so fast; years ago a first-year sociology course I took began with us all reading an essay titled something like *having fun as a social problem*. Even fun can be problematic in school, such as during music appreciation at the primary level, where students are expected to participate and *do the actions*. In these settings being a part of the group is rigidly enforced, such as when a song like Sharon Lois and Brahm's 'Skinnamarinky Dinky Dink' is played on the stereo. Like the 'Macarena' at a high school dance, non-participants may be singled out for ridicule or chastisement. Or they may be implored to join in and *just have fun* or *just be happy*.

The fact is, not everyone has fun performing asinine dance moves or actions and here AU allows us to say *Skiddery don't you dare*. No one minds if we don't dance because we're here to learn and that's fun in itself! Likewise, we don't all have to engage in identical learning techniques like drawing our shoe. We can tailor our learning to our personal abilities and take advantage of what makes us effective; if it's a shoe we must do, it can be anytime and anyplace...maybe while autumn camping next to a roaring fire! As we've seen, back to school Athabasca-

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

Doctorate in Business Administration (DBA) Info Session

Tues, Jan 8, 4:00 to 5:00 pm MST

Online

Hosted by AU Faculty of Business

business.athabascau.ca/event-details/doctorate-business-administration-dba-information-jan08-2019/

Register online at above link

AU Open House

Wed, Jan 9, 10:00 to 11:00 am MST

Online

Hosted by AU

www.athabascau.ca/discover/open-house/

Register online at above link

second session: Wed, Jan 9, 5:00 to 6:00 pm MST

Online MBA Info Session

Wed, Jan 9, 10:00 to 11:00 am MST

Online

Hosted by AU Faculty of Business

business.athabascau.ca/event-details/online-mba-executives-information-session-2019-1/

Register online at above link

AUSU Council Meeting

Thurs, Jan 10, 6:30 to 8:00 pm MST

Online

Hosted by AUSU

www.ausu.org/event/January-2019-council-meeting/

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

Adventures in Indigenous Methodologies: Making Space for Métis-Specific Approaches

Fri, Jan 11, 1:00 to 2:00 pm MST

Online

Hosted by AU Faculty of Graduate Studies

www.eventbrite.ca/e/adventures-in-indigenous-methodologies-making-space-for-metis-specific-approaches-presented-by-dr-tickets-52828994946

Register online at above link

All events are free unless otherwise specified

style turns up the good and down the lame for distance students who would rather focus on their studies than the vicissitudes of classroom interaction. And if we do decide to dance, we can do it to our own drum because it's as though no one is watching, or, at least, not a group of judgemental peers.

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

[I always enjoy the Fly on the Wall articles, they take a bit of thought to really get into, and where else will you find Sharon, Lois, and Bram juxtaposed with the philosophy and psychology of academic motivation? Students seems to agree, which is probably why this one, from mid September, received the nod.]



Wickedly Good Times

Tara Panrucker



Sometimes, there is nothing like saying you are done with something—or someone. Sometimes, it feels good to quit. Sometimes, the only way to feel better is to indulge in something decadent. And, sometimes, the only way to get your good vibes back is to do something you probably shouldn't.

I don't recommend robbing a bank, murdering your boss, or shipping a 'problem' child off to Antarctica so they'll really have something to cry about! Going to jail is an entirely different level of

wicked. There comes a time, however, when nothing else will do but a box of chocolate truffles, paired with multiple large glasses of your favourite red wine to wash it down. There comes that cold, dismal, snowy, spring Canadian day when nothing will heal your soul more than bundling under a pile of blankets with an all-day marathon of *Narcos*, joyfully scarfing every kind of comfort food you can get your sticky hands on.

Eventually, there comes a day when the finest way to achieve peace of mind is to discard that goal you've been unsuccessfully striving for the last five to ten years, and just serenely accept it's *not going to happen*. There comes a day when you confidently look your spouse or best friend in the eye and tell them the truth instead of giving a sugar-coated version that doesn't help them

anyway. “No, I don’t want to try ice climbing with you” or “No, those jeans do not flatter your butt”. Thus, your wickedly authentic voice begins to emerge out of the ‘nice zone’.

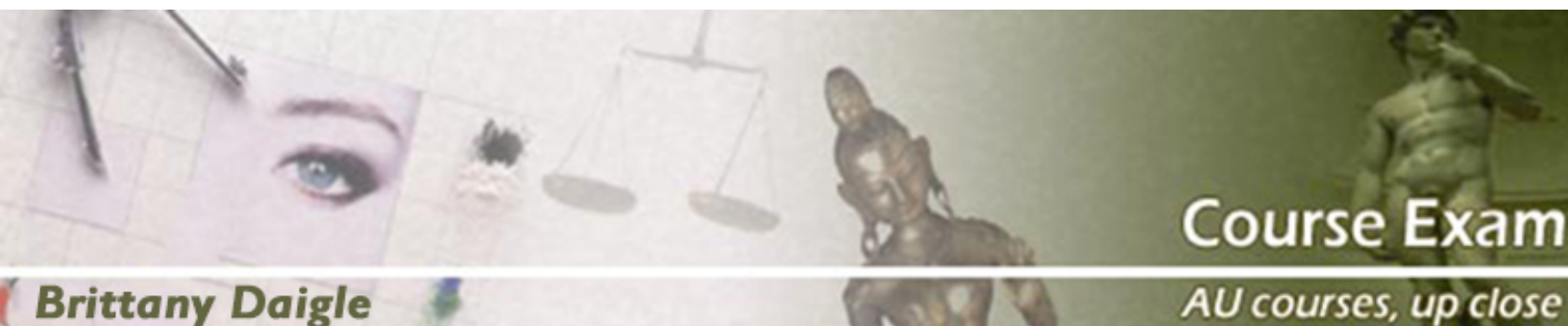
Doing what other people consider pointless, or just wrong, may be the only action that will bring you closer to a sense of what you stand for. Alternatively, instead of settling for ‘reality’, maybe you need to give yourself a virtual smack upside the head, get your act together, and chase your dreams, no matter how unbelievably difficult the road ahead may seem. The time is now to feel the fear and do it anyway.

Perhaps taking a month off from the killer term paper, killer work project, or killer marathon training program, will save your life—because maybe it’s actually killing you. Why not sit and watch the world go by for a change? Something amazing might happen: you might actually feel good doing nothing! Or, maybe it’s time to tell someone to take a hike and too bad if they don’t like it—if your sanity depends on it.

No one is going to agree with your choices all the time. No one’s opinion of you matters as much as your own. Life is not a dress rehearsal, and it’s not meant for living someone else’s dreams. Life is what you decide it will be, every day. When you stop caring what everyone thinks and let go of guilt over indulging in pleasure, you can move mountains and swim oceans. I’m speaking from experience. I quit jobs, dumped someone over the phone, had three desserts, went for a long Harley ride just for fun (and survived), and I called someone on their lies, to their face. No regrets.

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

[Aren’t we all a bit of the rebel? That’s why we’re at AU and not adhering to the traditional style of post-secondary, right? That’s probably why students picked this article, from late April, to be included among the Best of. Makes sense to me!]



Brittany Daigle

Course Exam

PSYC 290—General Psychology

Course Exam

AU courses, up close

Brittany Daigle

According to the syllabus, PSYC 290 (General Psychology) is a three-credit introductory psychology course that follows PSYC 289 (Psychology as a Natural Science). PSYC 290 “provides an introduction to behavioural areas of study” and shares the same textbook as PSYC 289, covering the entire second half.

General Psychology is comprised of ten units, five graded quizzes covering two units each and worth six percent each, two journal article critiques worth five percent each, one research paper worth twenty percent, and one final exam worth forty percent. The ten units discussed within this course cover topics such as motivation, emotion, human development across the life span, treatment of psychological disorders, stress, coping mechanisms, intelligence, and personality. For those who are concerned about the journal article critiques and the research paper, the course

supplies a journal article critique template, a journal article critique sample, and two sample research papers that will guide you through the entire writing process.

Dr. Adam Howorko is a tutor for multiple psychology courses, including PSYC 290, PSYC 333, PSYC 402, and PSYC 450, and has been tutoring at Athabasca University for over twelve years. Howorko states “PSYC 290 evaluates students on a variety of measures. The five quizzes have multiple choice questions that are a mixture of factual and conceptual short-answer questions based on the course text. Also, there are three papers to be written. Two of these papers are one to two-page critiques whereby a student chooses one article from a wide selection and follows a set of prescribed questions from a template to interpret the article by. The third paper is approximately four to five pages in length and has similar approach as the critiques, but four articles are integrated through synthesis and critique. The final evaluation is one hundred multiple choice questions covering the complete second half of the text.” The final exam is done online and nothing can be taken to the examination room.

Howorko continues, “when most people think of psychology they usually think of it in clinical terms and PSYC 290 does not disappoint in that. Diagnosis and treatment is taught for human psychological problems. Though for those interested in family dynamics or nursing, PSYC 290 also addresses the developmental stages of human development. This course is not as science oriented with biology as PSYC 289 but nonetheless, PSYC 290 remains science driven by its discoveries and research. Students who take this course will have a window into the discipline of psychology and from that will get a greater appreciation for understanding human relationships.”

Lastly, he states “this type of course is recommended for students interested in understanding human personality and a variety of aspects of the discipline of psychology that many students are surprised the discipline covers. Many students upgrading from nurse assistants to registered nurses take this course. Also, other paramedical field interests would make this a good course choice as further understanding of human behaviour is explored.”

When asking students their thoughts and opinions on PSYC 290 the replies were all positive. Katy Lowe stated “I am currently in it and I wish I had taken PSYC 289 first as it looks like it covers some of the same things. I really do enjoy the course though and find the quizzes easy since they are open book and often verbatim of the textbook or the psychtrek online resources. It’s heavy content and reading but the course does a good job of being interesting and engaging. I find my tutor very knowledgeable, helpful, and he responds quickly when I have questions. I would absolutely recommend this course to those interested.” Moreover, Isabelle Stehle had similar feelings, stating “I am writing the final tomorrow and I have really enjoyed the course. It is a challenging course, though extremely rewarding. There is a lot of reading and loads of theories and concepts to be learned. I am very glad that I took PSYC 289 beforehand as it made the course easier. My tutor was amazing and very efficient as assignments were grades within three days and she replied very quickly, even during this busy time of year.”

Katy and Isabelle had similar opinions to the nine students who answered the PSYC 290 survey question “I would recommend this course to other Athabasca University students.” Eight of the nine students said they would recommend PSYC 290 to other Athabasca University Students and one person said they would not recommend this course to other students. When you are close to completing PSYC 290, you will be prompted and encouraged to complete this survey as it gives other students and faculty insight to what students thought of the course.

From personally taking this course, I can tell you that it is very definition and content heavy, similar to PSYC 289. It is a course that will require you to read many chapters repeatedly to understand and retain the content. Fortunately, the quizzes and final exam are also definition

heavy so if you spend enough time studying it should pay off. My strongest advice would be to not procrastinate and to read more than just the pre-highlighted text within the textbook as it will give you a stronger understanding of the content.

Whether PSYC 290 is a required course for your chosen program or if it is just a general interest of yours, it is almost guaranteed that you will enjoy it and learn a lot interesting content surrounding human behaviour.

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

[Whether you're in the course and looking for more information as to what to expect in the exam or just trying to figure out which elective you want to take, the Course Exam articles can often give you that extra bit of information that makes the difference. That's probably why they're consistently among the most viewed in The Voice Magazine. This one, from early January, is the most popular and still gains a few new views every week. That's why it deserves to be part of the Best of edition.]



Self-Care and Perspective

Deanna Roney



Regardless of where you work or study, it can be too easy to push how much time we spend on our occupation. There is a feeling pushed on social media that if you want to get anywhere you need to work, be busy, stay busy. If you take time off or aren't busy *all* the time you're not trying hard enough, and if you don't try hard enough you won't get to where you want to be.

But there is also the self-care side of things. The side where people are starting to recognize burn out and the need to stop before you overwork yourself. It is vital to take these days off and recharge. To take a few hours to yourself in the evening.

With two polarizing ideas, what do you listen to? It can be stressful even if you aren't aware that it is affecting you. Do you hustle for that dream job 24/7 or do you take your weekends off? Do you put in the extra time, or are you draining yourself and you absolutely, without a doubt, must take those two hours in the evening to take yourself to a movie?

The answer is going to be different for everyone. I found that for a long period of time, I hustled, I kept myself busy. If I wasn't actively working toward my goal I struggled to relax, I felt like I needed to be doing

something. And, in all honesty, I did need to hustle to get to where I am. I needed to put in that time, to research, to apply for positions, to ask questions. I needed to be doing everything I could to make progress.

Now that I have gained some ground I am easier on myself, I take time to exercise each day, whether that is in the morning or the evening. I take some weekends off, sometimes only one

day, sometimes both. But something I heard the other day that really resonated with me is that this idea of self-care can become stressful in itself; which completely contradicts its purpose.

For example, if you told yourself that you would take an hour walk for self-care, but work is piling up, deadlines are looming, so you try to get through your work to make time for that hour walk; but, leading up to that you are grinding yourself down, stressing yourself out. Then when (if) you get to that walk, you are already beyond burnt out. It would have, in this case, made more sense to have your self-care by not going for that walk, instead acknowledging that it will be better for you to stay and just finish the work, and, when it is caught up, then go.

Sometimes the idea of self-care, of taking time for ourselves, ends up being a task on our to-do list that causes more stress. So cut yourself some slack, it isn't a bad thing if you have to skip that for the day, it doesn't mean you aren't working effectively. Take the time when you can, self-care is important, but it should not be adding to your stress level, and you shouldn't be feeling guilty about it. Because, if you are, it is completely self-defeating.

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

[Another student choice, this article from late October was noted as an article that we can all relate to sometimes. As every AU student eventually learns, burn out is real. Dealing with it ahead of time can make all the difference.]



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.

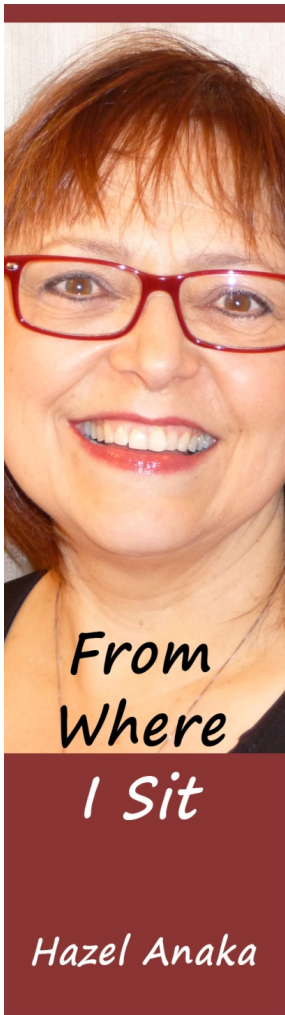
Anita Bean reveals the skinny on athletes' diets in her book *The Complete Guide to Sports Nutrition* (8th Edition):

- 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!*

[A lot of what *The Voice Magazine* provides is advice. Student-to-student advice and connection, perhaps so popular because we don't have the same spaces to connect with students as traditional universities do. *The Fit Student* has been providing advice for health, both physical and mental, nearly every week, and this particular article in the series was the one that students have read the most.]



From
Where
I Sit

Hazel Anaka

Shortest Path

As long as I can remember I've been a sucker for blank journals. Of course, back in the day they were a motley collection of simple three-subject coil notebooks or plain Jane, utilitarian books like the old black and white Mead composition books of our youth. They ranged in size from small, pocket or purse sized booklets to over-sized artists' sketchbooks or dollar store mid-sized ones. They had ruled pages or stark pristine scary blank ones.

If I was feeling especially fine and in need of a splurge, I might spring for a moleskin one. Or a tactile one with handmade paper and leather wrap cover. During a sale at Chapters I snagged a hot pink Kate Spade one. I've got a couple boxed sets with lovely watercolour garden/floral images. Some had mod '70s style cover art. Some have elastic closures or ribbon bookmarks.

A quick look around my office reminds me of a lovely coil book called *Woman's Journey* that I used during a Manitoba retreat. It's got quotes, pouches and tabs like Spirituality, Reaching Goals, Family, Joy Catchers. In another, I found a goals list I wrote in 2005. No, I still don't have a Mercedes or gallery representation but I have achieved others.

There are also interest-specific journals and naturally I've got some of those too: book list, wine, travel, project, restaurants. And don't get me started on the ones with writing prompts! For Christmas, Roy and I each got *The Story of My Life* journals from Hilary, hint, hint.

Most of us have received promotional ones with embossed company name and matching pen as gifts or as convention swag. I've begun using the 2-pack journals available at Costco as a repository and to house my endless to-do-list for my festival work.

And let's not forget the branded companion journals to bestsellers. Designed as a tool to supplement and maximize the efficacy of the original book, they are also shrewd marketing for the author. Think Julia Cameron's *Morning Pages Journal*, Sarah Ban Breathnach's *Illustrated Discovery Journal*, *Gratitude Journal*, and *Simple Abundance Companion*, or Rhonda Byrne's *The Secret Gratitude Book*.

I'm ashamed to admit how many of these journals are still empty. For the longest time, I doubted whether what I intended to write was journal-worthy. Jim Rohn talked about how early on his life he bought a blank book for \$22 in the hope that he would find content sufficiently valuable to justify the purchase.

But I am getting better. I've been faithfully completing Neil Pasricha's *Two Minute Mornings* journal and Breathnach's *The Simple Abundance Journal of Gratitude* for weeks now. I've been less faithful with my new *Write One Thing* and *Draw One Thing* journals but each has been 'violated' by me.

In a conversation with a former *Voice* editor, I learned she was a faithful journal writer and had years worth of chronological, organized identical journals. Wow. On one level I envy that discipline and wisdom. On another I know that is not me. Unfortunately, for me that means that finding anything specific is like an archeological dig. So, I'll continue in my own flawed way to record my life and thoughts, wring insight and wisdom from what I read and see and do, and aim to improve my practice and the ability to retrieve specific content when needed. In my opinion, journaling is one of the shortest (and cheapest) paths to health and wellbeing, from where I sit.

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

[Many people have noted the lack of Hazel Anaka's articles in *The Voice Magazine* recently, but I assure you that's not any choice of mine. My understanding is she's moved on from *The Voice* to writing for her local newspaper, and we wish her all the best in doing so. But it was certainly nice to see one of her last pieces for *The Voice*, published in late January, being a student pick for the Best of edition.]

Porkpie Hat Drifting on the Ocean's Edge

Darjeeling Jones



A few years ago, I found myself walking along an empty beach on a remote stretch of the northern coast of British Columbia. The snow-capped peaks of Alaskan mountains seemed just a pebble's throw away. To the west was the dim, spectral blue-grey haze of the Haida Gwaii islands. Beyond that, only Japan.

But I wasn't paying much attention to anything beyond the few feet of beach beneath my feet. I was walking along, lifting rocks, seeing blood red crabs scuttling about, watching baby eels—not much larger than pomegranate seeds—twisting and turning. I was looking at cream-coloured shells as

intricate and startling in their beauty as any ghost orchid. I was observing sea stars and tide pool anemones that seemed as wondrous to me as any lifeform that may be found on the far side of Alpha Centauri. The feathers of gulls and ravens were scattered all around, like mysterious runes, spelling out poems in the language of demons or angels.

I remember considering, right then, the innumerable hours of my life I have spent engaged in that seemingly unproductive pursuit. As a child on the beach in England, the creaking pier of Clacton pointing like a dark finger to the North Sea. As a teenager in Stanley Park and on Spanish Banks in Vancouver. As an adult on so many far-flung shores. The Caribbean, the Pacific, the Atlantic, the edge of the arctic circle. Hawaii, Iceland, Newfoundland; always walking, watching, waiting—for what? Whatever the tide brings. Nothing too spectacular, I suppose, when looked at in a certain light. Just bits of glass, fragments of shell, some signs of life, the bones of ambiguous

creatures. Still, nothing has ever fired my imagination more. No pastime has been more fulfilling.

It seems such a metaphor for so many things, this seemingly pointless act. The artistic process, for instance: waiting to see what ideas, what inspiration might drift from the wild depths onto the ragged, windswept shores of consciousness. It's the way I feel when I am in flaneur mode, walking with my camera through the streets of my hometown, or a city I have never set foot in before, always eager to know what is around the next corner. The way I feel, too, when I am allowing my mind to just dream and drift and wander, waiting for the next line of a poem or a story to flash like a bright shard of sea glass or a lost ring in the moonlight.

Perhaps it is even a metaphor for the very act of living a full, rich life. Walking, waiting. Not forcing things, but not passive, either. Eyes wide open, paying careful attention, always remaining receptive to the possibility of wonder and surprise. Bearing witness, refusing to succumb to ennui and numbness, persistently seeing the beauty in the ordinary, always being aware that the next few feet of the journey along this wild and uncharted shore might bring you something you have never encountered before; a glass bead, an oyster with a pearl, a leviathan's bones. Walking resolutely but without definite expectation, alive to the visceral meanings of the world—the feel of sand between the toes, the smell of salt and rain in the air, the simple, eternal rhythm of wave after wave.

[First published in late September, this was only the third article in the new Porkpie Hat series, but received a high percentage of the votes. Sometimes, good writing is as much about the feeling it gives as much as the subject matter. I firmly believe that the Porkpie Hat series is about the sensuality of writing and word choice as it is about anything it actually talks about. Best of material? Absolutely.]



The Problem with Patio Season

Carla Knipe



It is the high season of summer, which is also known as “patio season”. The long days and light evenings beckon people to stay outside as long as possible and invites casual dining al fresco. Patio season is also associated with enjoying an alcoholic beverage or two; perhaps a really cold pint of beer, a glass of wine, a pitcher of Sangria, or a classy gin and tonic. But this is a recent phenomenon. Not too long ago, drinking alcohol in public was shunned and only acceptable either in a bar, the comfort of home, or the occasional cocktail party. Now, the consumption is alcohol in public

is far more accepted—even encouraged.

But people's relationship with alcohol goes back further than one might imagine. In fact, it starts at the earliest point of human civilization. The theory goes that if it wasn't for alcohol, we humans wouldn't be who we are today, because the fermentation of grain or fruit made water safe to drink, free from the pathogens that would kill us otherwise. Alcohol also created an efficient source of calories in early diets, which helped humans develop the brain and body power that

gave homo sapiens an advantage over other species. Another theory is that early on, people recognized that alcohol made them happy and helped to create a shared experience that forged close societal bonds.

Nevertheless, the patterns of alcohol consumption throughout history show that there has always been both positive and negative perspectives about it. The positive aspects of booze range from being associated with artistic inspiration, happy celebrations, and even an integral part of cultures themselves. Just imagine the Scots without whiskey, the Caribbean without rum, or the French without Champagne! Conversely, drinking alcohol—especially to the point of becoming drunk—has been viewed throughout history as a vice, not a virtue, and much research has been devoted to the subject. The attitudes that looked down on the notorious drunken feasts of ancient Rome carried on through the ages in some form or another and persist today. Drunkenness in women was something that was especially frowned upon. Various religious groups throughout the world, from Muslims to Mormons, also condemn alcohol, and the scourge of drunkenness was behind the Prohibition and Temperance movements.

This doesn't mean we have shunned alcohol. Far from it. Unlike the vice of smoking, which has become the pariah of habits in western society (thanks to government and health campaigns making it far less attractive than it used to be) similar measures have not been applied to alcohol. In fact, the availability of alcohol and the amount of advertising for booze has significantly increased from the late twentieth century until now, most notably a large increase in stealth advertising for alcoholic beverages through sponsorship deals for cultural and sporting events. It is almost unfathomable to think that Big Tobacco would be allowed to sponsor such events these days, but, somehow, alcohol has become more normalized than it ever was, and this trend shows no sign of stopping.

Because alcohol is an easily obtainable and legal drug, it is seen as an acceptable way to self-medicate for busy and stressed people. From the harangued mother who needs a glass of wine after the kids are in bed, to the career professional who sees cracking open a cold one a necessary part of networking—and yes, this includes the phenomenon of “patio season”—alcohol is the drug of choice for many, and its acceptance seems to be growing in popularity with the widespread use of caffeine. Even the internet is full of memes glorifying alcohol, typified by the jokes about “wine o'clock” or “beer-thirty.”

But this is not to say that the consumption of alcohol is without its cautions. According to studies by the Social Institute Research Centre and Johns Hopkins School of Public Health, binge-drinking is increasing at an alarming rate, especially among women and youth. Even the *perception* of alcohol is changing dramatically: to where most people feel no shame at all at consuming alcohol either in public or in their home. Despite the studies warning people against the dangers of over-consumption, there is a lot of confusing research. Some is about how much is too much, with another equally large body of research saying that regularly imbibing has a lot of health benefits. So, who do we believe?

Again, there is not an easy answer. It all seems to boil down to personal choice and personal values. The general advice seems to be to stick within the medically accepted guidelines for weekly units of alcohol and try to have more days per week that you are alcohol-free versus those days where you do have a drink. The generally-accepted advice tends to agree that if you feel that your alcohol consumption is getting out of control, making you feel like you're having health, financial or relationship issues directly caused by your drinking, you should seek professional help.

Of course, this all seems like common sense—we should automatically know this. And yet, somehow, sensibilities get overridden by the allure of alcohol. But let me ask you this; could you go for an entire month without drinking? That may just be a really huge ask—and for many people, it seems almost impossible without a great deal of difficulty. But having a dry month is behind a campaign by the UK charity Alcohol Concern, that calls for people to have a break from the sauce for thirty continuous days. Although this might seem like just another marketing campaign by a charity, it is gaining momentum partly due to national print, radio and television ads in the British media. Medical professionals are also giving wholehearted support to the campaign because they are seeing an alarming increase in liver problems and addiction.

But is this campaign really necessary? Or is it just another tactic designed create a lot of guilt about the lifestyle choices that people make? The short answer is: it depends. The problem with alcohol (pun intended) is that prevailing attitudes toward it depend on the society and culture that one belongs to. But no matter how you personally view alcohol, the fact remains that it is still mainly identified as a drug with side effects—not just a beverage. If you are going to drink alcohol, please do so responsibly.

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

[Still looking for a New Year's resolution? This student-voted article, first published at the beginning of August, might be just the idea you were searching for! A somewhat deeper dive into a topic, I enjoy getting this type of article in my mailbox, and so it's great to see that they resonate with Voice readers as well.]

Women of Interest

Stanley Ann Dunham

Barb Godin



Stanley Ann Dunham was born on November 29, 1942, in Wichita, Kansas, and died November 7, 1995, in Honolulu, Hawaii. Dunham was a highly educated woman, who received a BA, MA, and PhD. She was an anthropologist, whose main interest was in women's roles in the cottage industries in Indonesia as well as blacksmithing in the small island of Java, Indonesia. Ann Dunham created microcredit programs in Indonesia while working for the United States Agency for International Development. Microcredit programs are loans extended to impoverished entrepreneurs who do not have collateral and are not employed. The goal is to eliminate poverty in poor countries. In 2009 up to 74 million people held microloans, and their repayment rate was 95%. Following the election of her son, Barack Obama as the 44th President of the United States, there was an increased interest in Dunham's research and, in 2009, a book based

on Dunham's 1992 dissertation was published: "Surviving against the Odds: Village Industry in Indonesia."

Stanley Ann Dunham was named by her unconventional mother, who was no stranger to drama. Dunham later dropped the Stanley and reverted to simply Ann Dunham or S. Ann Dunham. The Dunham family moved to Honolulu and, at 17 years of age, Ann entered the University of Hawaii at Manoa. Within a short time, she became pregnant. The father of her child, Barak Obama Sr.,

was black and from another culture yet they married soon after learning of the pregnancy. Barack was born in 1961. The couple divorced in 1964, and in 1965 she married Lolo Soetoro, a surveyor who was studying geography at the University of Hawaii. In 1970 they welcomed the birth of a daughter, Maya Soetoro-Ng. Following Soetoro's graduation from the University of Hawaii, the family moved to Indonesia. In 1971 Dunham chose to send her son back to Hawaii to live with his grandparents to attend grade 5 at the Punahou School. Soon after, Dunham and her daughter moved back to Hawaii and Ann began graduate studies in anthropology. When she completed her studies, Dunham and her daughter returned to Indonesia, but Barack chose to finish high school in Hawaii and remain with his grandparents. In 1980 Ann and her second husband divorced.

Ann Dunham went on to have a varied and successful career in rural development in Indonesia. A few of her accomplishments include teaching English, as well as teaching a course for staff members at the University of Indonesia, in Jakarta. She was a consultant for the International Labour Organization in Jakarta and a consultant in Central Java on the Indonesian Ministry of Industry's Provincial Development program. From 1981 to 1984 Ann Dunham worked for the Ford Foundations Southeast Asia regional office in Jakarta, as a program officer for women and employment. In 1992 Dunham received her PhD in anthropology from the University of Hawaii.

Ann Dunham died of uterine cancer on November 22, 1995. She was remembered in a 2007 campaign speech where Obama talked of his mother's struggle to pay expensive medical bills during her cancer treatment and the need for a better health care system in America.

Find more at:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ann_Dunham

<http://www.unitecllc.com/epub/a-singular-woman-the-untold-story-of-barack-obamas-mother>

Barbara Godin is a graduate of AU and writes the "Dear Barb" column. She lives in London, Ontario with her husband and two dogs. She can be reached on twitter @BarbGod

[Like most post-secondary institutions in Canada, AU's student body is primarily women. So when Barb came to me with the idea of a column promoting succesful or unusual women as something AU students might like to read, I thought she might be on to something. It turns out she wasn't wrong, and the "Women of Interest" column has expanded from being a short "filler" type of piece to a full article every month. So it was rewarding to see that it seems students agree with the idea, as a number of the Women of Interest articles were named, but I chose this one because it also generated a few comments on social media, and has enjoyed some of the higher readership numbers of the series.]



And that's it folks. The only thing left is the graphic, an installment of Poet Maeve, and my personal choice for the Best of issue because it was both a solid reflection of the type of material we published last year and one that made me laugh.

I hope your holidays have been great, and I'm looking forward to being able to bring you another year full of enjoyable reads provided by AU students for AU students! -Karl

Poet Maeve
Dark Forces**Wanda Waterman**



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IMPORTANT DATES

- 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](#)
- Jan 30: [Deadline to apply for course extension for Mar](#)
- Feb 10: [Deadline to register in a course starting Mar 1](#)
- Feb 19: [AUSU Council Meeting](#)



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