



THE VOICE

Vol 27 Issue 30 2019-07-26

Minds We Meet

Interviewing Students Like You!

The Vampire: A New History Reviewing Nick Groom's Book

Never Become an Idol The Danger of Celebrity

*Plus:
Poet Maeve
Finding Enlightenment
and much more!*



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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR



We love to hear from you!
Send your questions and comments to voicemagazine.org,
and please indicate if we may publish your letter!

Hey! Did you know the Voice Magazine has a [Facebook page](#)?

No kidding! We also do the [twitter](#) thing once in a while if you're into that.

Editorial

Compellingly Non-Productive

Karl Low



Vampires as pathogens. Who would have thought?

Writer John Buhler returns to us this week looking at a book by Nick Groom, that takes a different look at the history of the Vampire: how this undead monster came to be, and what's become of it since.

The idea that the vampire came to be as an expression of fear against contagion, disease undying coming from the grave and making people sick and weak in the dark of the night, may have seemed quite reasonable in the days before germ theory.

Just the type of thing you need for summer reading, non-productive, but compelling none-the-less. That's kind of the feeling I get about this issue of *The Voice Magazine*. From Wanda Waterman's advice on why you want to avoid becoming a super-start idol, like any of us are in significant danger of that, to the Fly on the Wall's article, somewhere between and exploration and an exhortation of ditching responsibility and enjoying the summer.

After all, nobody thinks of relaxing in the spring.

There's too much to do. Too much expected. What other season has a chore named after it, after all? Then there's autumn, but if you're like most, it flies by too quickly, in part because of all the time you're having to spend catching up from what you didn't do in summer. And finally winter. Well, if you're a Canadian, winter may be the time for fun, but it's certainly not a time for relaxing. Winter fun tends to be more active, it has to be to keep warm, after all.

So that leaves us with summer. A time that we can relax, sometimes even without guilt as we schedule holidays. Which, in a very round-a-bout manner, brings me to my own holidays. With everybody enjoying the summer already, it seemed like a good time for me to take a breather myself, which is why there will be no issue of *The Voice Magazine* on August 9. I'll be attempting to take a small break, which really means having no excuse to avoid getting caught up on various projects around the house, but, honestly, I think I need the break. I'm not approaching each issue, each article, with the energy that it really deserves lately, and I'm starting to be afraid it shows. Does it show?

Maybe I'm just imagining it. Because you can still find a bunch of great articles this week, plus upcoming events, scholarships, advice, and course reviews, and, of course, we start it all off with a feature interview with a student much like you. If you're facing doubts about whether your AU education is worth it, then this week you really should enjoy the read!

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

MINDS WE MEET



In Sylvan Lake, Alberta, Briana Evans lives with her two children and takes her Bachelor of Health Administration courses. She hopes to eventually get a job in hospital management and get a master's degree. This is her story.

Could you provide us with a little bit of background information about yourself? Who are you? Where do you live?

My name is Briana and I am a mother of two boys ages ten and two. We live in Sylvan Lake, where I was born and raised.

What program are you in? Are you liking the program?

I am currently enrolled in the Bachelor of Health Administration program and I'm finding it very interesting so far. I am learning a lot of new things and it is also a good refresher on some other areas that I haven't studied in a while.

Describe the path that led you to AU. What was it that made you realize you wanted to go back to school, and what pushed you into the program you've signed up for?

I received my Medical Office Assistant diploma (MOA) in 2010 and from then I have worked as a MOA, medical receptionist, clinic manager, referral coordinator and a privacy officer. I have come to the realization that I can't really grow or do more than this with my current education and made the difficult choice to go back to school. Other people tried to talk me out of it and told me I was crazy, but I knew what I wanted and now here I am, one year down and two more to go.

What do you do like to do when you're not studying? Any hobbies?

When I am not studying, I like to spend time with my family, going for walks and hiking in Jasper. We enjoy entertaining in our backyard and having fires with our friends. I don't really have any hobbies; I feel I don't have time for those.

What are your plans for this education once you finish? What would be your dream job?

When I am finished school and have my degree, I would like to get a job in hospital management and eventually go back to school and get my master's degree. My end goal is to work in a higher government level health administration like the World Health Organization, once my kids are older, of course.

Who in your life had the greatest influence on your desire to learn?

The goal in my life was to be like no one else in my family. I had a bit of a rough upbringing and grew up around addicts who never really had much of a work ethic. I was the first in my immediate family to graduate high school and go to college and I only intend to continue to be the best version of myself that I can be.

Could you describe your experience with online learning so far?

I am really enjoying online learning as it allows me to work full time, do full time studies and be a full-time mom all at the same time. It is definitely difficult at times, but it pushes me to work hard to see what I am truly capable of.

At what point did you waver the most about continuing your schooling? What caused it and what got you through it?

I definitely wavered about continuing my education. Missing out on being with my family at times when I have to study or write exams is really difficult at times, but I just remember that it is all going to be worth it in the end. My boys will understand that I am doing this all for them and to have a better life and it also help me to be a good role model for them and shows that hard work pays off.

What's your favorite AU course that you have taken so far, and why? Would you recommend the course to others?

My favourite course so far would have to be HADM 326 (Health Issues: Health and Healing). I learned so much that I had no idea about, and overall, it was such an interesting course.

Would you recommend HADM 326 to other students?

I would definitely recommend this course to others and I actually brought it up in several discussions with the physicians at my work!

What have you given up to go to AU that you regret the most?

I really miss my free time after work. I feel like I am always go, go, go and I never get a break. I go to work all day, come home and make supper for my family, then I study all night. It feels like an endless cycle that is honestly quite exhausting.

Was it worth it?

To be honest, I'm not 100% sure this is worth it yet. I hope it is in the end and all I can do is stay positive and continue to do my best to work my way into the career I want.

How do you find communications with your course tutors?

Communicating with the majority of my tutors has been really easy. Some were a bit difficult and took some time for them to respond, but I understand that they are busy as well and when they did respond they were very knowledgeable and were able to help with my questions.

What's your pet peeve if you have one?

My biggest pet peeve would be open cupboards. It irritates me when I see an open cupboard and I just have to close it!

What famous person, past or present, would you like to have lunch with, and why?

I would love to have lunch with Ghandi, to get a real insight to how he truly saw the world. He said "be the change you want to see in the world" and that statement has really stuck with me and I have even passed it down to my kids. It makes me want to be a better person.

Describe the proudest moment in your life.

The proudest moment in my life was when I walked across the stage and received my college diploma. I felt like I accomplished what I worked so hard for and I am excited to do it again.

Describe one thing that distinguishes you from most other people.

This is a hard one. I would have to say my mind. The way that I perceive that world around me and am always willing and trying to help others in any way that I can. Whether they are friends, family or even strangers. I really strive to always be a better version of myself each day.

What is the most valuable lesson you have learned in life?

Never say goodbye to those you love. My grandpa taught me my entire life that you never say goodbye, it's always see you later. Because goodbye means forever and see you later means that you will see them again.

Have you traveled? Where has life taken you so far?

Unfortunately, I have not been lucky enough to travel very much. I have been to Florida once, Mexico twice and travelled in Canada a bit.

Out of the places you have been to, which was your favorite and why?

I would have to say my favourite places are Jasper because of the mountains and beautiful lakes and hiking trails, also, Cancun, Mexico. The beaches there are so beautiful, and I love how iguanas just walk the streets like they own the place.

What (non-AU) book are you reading now?

Other than the books I read every night to my kids; I have no spare time to read non-AU books. My life consists of work, school, and mom life for the next two years!

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



Scholarship of the Week

Digging up scholarship treasure for AU students.

Scholarship name: Tweaked SEO Scholarship

Sponsored by: Tweaked SEO

Deadline: August 31, 2019

Potential payout: \$1000

Eligibility restriction: Applicants must be 18 or older, be enrolled in a post-secondary institution in Canada or the U.S., and have a GPA of 3.2 or higher.

What's required: An online application form, along with a minimum 750-word article on any Digital Marketing subject.

Tips: The minimum word count is listed variously as 700 or 750 words, so go with 750 or more to be safe.

Where to get info: www.tweakedseo.com/scholarship



Why No Artist Should Ever Become an Idol

Wanda Waterman



"Rapine, avarice, expense,
This is idolatry; and these we adore;
Plain living and high thinking are no more."
- William Wordsworth

"Everyone should be respected as an individual, but no one idolized."
- Albert Einstein

If you're taking business courses to manage your musical career, studying literature to inform your writing skills, poring over art history to educate your artistic sensibility, or entering any of those careers that

might just lead to stardom, I have a warning for you. Even if you're smart enough to skirt this danger, the people with whom you associate may have a set of criteria for success that doesn't completely jibe with your self-interest, and you need to stand firm. The warning is this: Don't aim to become an idol.

The practice of idolatry harks back to our pagan ancestors: polytheists and animists who populated their houses, temples, and public spaces with formed, carved, or cast images of the gods they worshiped. The practice of idol worship, stemming from before the historical record, suggests there's something in being human that makes us want to reduce the divine to a visible form, then bypass the worship of the divine to worship the form in which, we claim, the divine dwells. How quickly we forget that the divine, being spiritual, can't be housed in any material thing.

It's written in Genesis Rabbah that, as a youth, the patriarch Abraham made a mockery of his father's idol business by breaking a few statues and then claiming they'd assassinated each other in a terrible combat. In doing so he showed idols to be merely empty shells.

The empty shell metaphor can be extended to our current practice of exalting artists and entertainers to the status of deities. When this happens, the artist's public image takes on a status separate from her true personhood. Becoming an idol in the current sense is an extremely attractive prospect, the tragedies that normally follow in the wake of stardom simply adding to the glamour. The large quantity of money, garnered apparently quickly and effortlessly, is incentive enough. And surely being adored by heaps of fans showering you with cash and adulation would make up for that universal existential emptiness, that sense of something missing, wouldn't it?

We know modern idols have it rough, very few arriving near the ends of their lives claiming to have achieved contentment. They're expected to keep up posh appearances despite incomes that are sporadic and insecure. They're often cheated by managers and even friends and family. They attract the wrong sorts of partners, people who see them as trophies instead of human beings. They're bombarded with temptations to self-destructive behaviour. In essence, stars suffer because their images have been marketed as commercial commodities, a process undermining their every humanity and erasing their true value as individuals.

That's not all. Idols are representative of something to which they're not truly connected. The manufactured copy of Taylor Swift is not the real Taylor Swift because the real Taylor Swift probably wouldn't sell digital cameras. Her image is carefully constructed by people who can just as easily destroy it. Idols have no voice of their own but rather are spoken through, just as the priests in ancient temples would hide and ventriloquize the statues of their gods. Should the artist take an unexpected musical direction (Bob Dylan) or fail to create an album as good as the last one (Carol King) they may find themselves the targets of extreme rancour from the very fans who'd once swooned at their feet. You may be your own boss, but your audience owns your public image.

The sculptor Rodin famously advised Rilke, who'd been moaning about how he should live as a poet, that he should stop thinking about it and simply get to work. The French philosopher Jacques Maritain wrote extensively on why renaissance artists were able to achieve the great works of their day, unequalled since; it was because in their time artists weren't placed on pedestals but were simply working men plying their craft. Humility, Maritain maintained, was key to their artistic excellence.

If you take a look into the past you may notice that deified artists don't seem to have the same quality of output as those who simply "get to work." There are many examples of ages during which a similar thing happened. The British Invasion, the folk music movement, the pop art of the early sixties, and early hip hop were all built by artists who were just doing their thing. When the wheels of commerce for their own nefarious reasons decided to lift them to the status of gods, turning their images into idols to be worshipped, the quality of these artists' work declined.

Paul McCartney once confessed to thinking that when people were raving about Paul McCartney it wasn't him they were talking about but some other guy. Marilyn Monroe clearly saw that any love coming her way was strictly for the sex symbol image she'd cultivated.

"I've never fooled anyone," she pointed out. "I've let people fool themselves. They didn't bother to find out who and what I was. Instead they would invent a character for me. I wouldn't argue with them. They were obviously loving somebody I wasn't."

To add to the dilemma, the construction and maintenance of an image worth worshipping takes valuable time away from creativity and honest work on your craft. Even today's DIY music movement, itself a rebellion against the music industry's monopolization of talent and money, is guilty of demanding so much time creating publicity for oneself that the long hours needed for artistic excellence are eaten up by self-promotion.

If you've chosen the creative path, take heed; get to work, polish your craft, build a body of the best work you can muster, and let the idols battle it out among themselves until they fall down in shards. Leave idolatry to the Sinatras and do it your way.

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

**You Can't Get a Degree from "Google University":
Critically Evaluating Internet Sources
workshop**

Thurs, Aug 1, 10:00 am to 12:00 pm MDT
Online

Hosted by AU Library
library.athabasca.ca/orientations.html
No pre-registration necessary

Looking ahead...

AUSU Annual Members Meeting

Tues, Aug 13, 6:30 to 8:00 pm MDT
Online

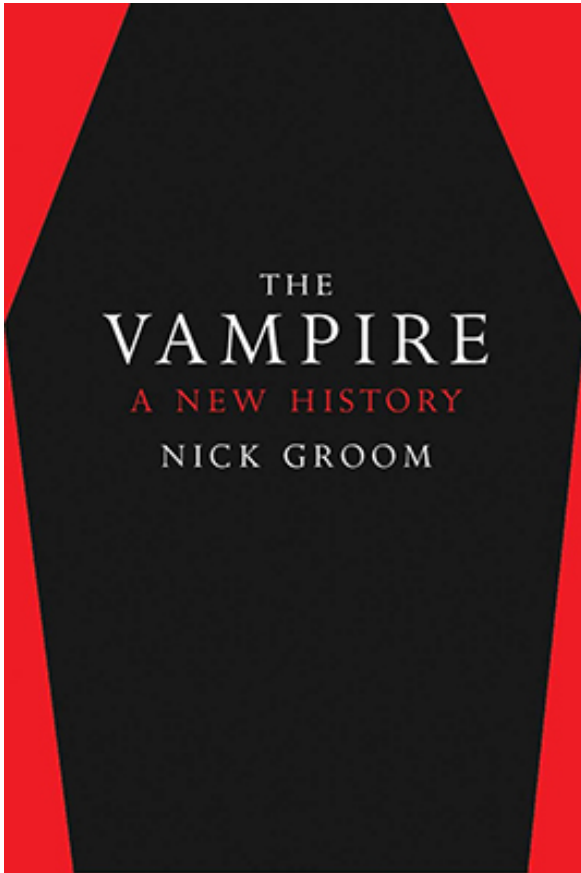
Hosted by AUSU
www.ausu.org/event/ausu-annual-members-meeting-3/
No pre-registration required; e-mail
governance@ausu.org for meeting package

All events are free unless otherwise specified

The Vampire: A New History

By Nick Groom

John Buhler



Early in the eighteenth century, on the fringes of the Hapsburg domain, folklore about vampires came into contact with the Enlightenment and its rational outlook. In effect, according to Nick Groom's book, *The Vampire: A New History*, the vampire was "discovered" through medical examination and philosophical thought when imperial physicians and officials on the eastern edges of the Austria's empire investigated reports of the dead returning to feed upon the living. Having undergone rational, scientific investigation, the vampire, in a sense, became real, a subject of medical and philosophical scrutiny. Groom investigates the many ways in which vampires presented scientific, legal, philosophical, and religious problems in eighteenth century Europe, and how vampire mythology continues to be a part of our culture.

In the 1700's, among the Slavic subjects of the Austrian empire, the investigation of alleged incidents of vampirism, and the exhumation and killing of vampires were subject to legal codes enforced by occupying soldiers and civil authorities, and sometimes involved examinations by imperial surgeons. These events were reported in the popular press of the day, leading philosophers and clergymen to contemplate the nature of the vampire. If vampires were once human, philosophers wondered, might they retain anything of their former human character? Some theologians merely dismissed vampires as Catholic or Orthodox superstition, others saw the vampire as evidence of an afterlife, and others still considered it a demonic deception.

Vampires also became a theme in Romantic literature, which—with its emphasis on emotion and imagination—was a reaction to the rationality and empiricism of the Enlightenment. In 1816, in a Swiss villa on Lake Geneva, the English poet Lord Byron challenged each of his travelling companions to write a ghost story. That competition brought Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* into being, but also inspired Byron's physician, John Polidori, to write *The Vampyre*.

While vampires continued to make appearances in literature and theatre throughout the nineteenth century, Groom credits Bram Stoker's *Dracula*, published in 1897, as having had a "seismic influence." Incorporating accumulated vampire folklore, Stoker researched geography, history, and medicine, but the story was also influenced by the real-life crimes of Jack the Ripper. In Stoker's gothic horror, the Transylvanian Count Dracula brings his thirst for fresh blood to England, along with 50 boxes of his native soil, which he plans to distribute among the numerous English properties he's purchased. Written 120 years before today's Brexit crisis, it reflects the xenophobia and the anxiety over international trade that were current in Britain at the time.

Three hundred years after Austrian authorities and physicians began investigating incidents of vampire predation, the legacy of the undead remains popular today. Nevertheless, in *Medusa's Gaze and Vampires Bite: The Science of Monsters*, science writer Matt Kaplan suggests that we have

become less fearful of vampires because we now understand that they aren't responsible for deadly diseases. In contrast, Groom's perspective credits vampires with having profound adaptability, ensuring their continued longevity. Indeed, vampire stories have changed over time, found their way into new genres, taken on new elements, yet show no sign that they are about to die any time soon.

Groom's book, like the evolution of the vampire narrative, isn't at all predictable. The author makes it clear that his book isn't meant to be an exhaustive investigation of everything related to vampires, but with the theme of blood coursing through the book, it's surprising that there are no references to diseases spread by blood, particularly the demonization and fear of those infected with HIV/AIDS. And although Groom does indeed catalogue many ways in which vampires have been represented, he makes no mention of the influence that vampires had upon the representation of zombies in today's popular culture; George Romero's pivotal 1968 film, *Night of the Living Dead*, was influenced by Richard Matheson's *I am Legend*, a horror novel about a vampire plague. Since then, zombies—like vampires before them—have spread infection through their bites.

The book ends with the Irish potato famine, and the panic and mass death that it caused. That plague, part of Bram Stoker's own family history, originated underground, moved silently through the land, very much like a murderous, stalking vampire. Even with the humble potato, Groom reminds us, the ordinary can suddenly become evil.

John has his BGS from AU and started writing for The Voice Magazine while he was taking it in 2003.

Student Sizzle — AU's Hot Social Media Topics

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

AthaU Facebook Group

Alyssa seeks help conducting research on the AU Library's site; responders provide tips and links to library orientation videos. Laura struggles with dense course material language; other students weigh in with their experiences and tips to decipher academese.

Other posts include finding a tutor for course help, citing course material, masters in counselling program, and courses PSYC 289 and 290, and SOSC 366.

reddit

A would-be student is shocked by withdrawal fees levied after withdrawing from a semester's worth of courses before they started. Other posts include courses COMP 482, MATH 266, PSYC 402, and a cluster of science courses.

Twitter

@AthabascaU tweets: "As an #AthabascaU student you are able to submit written work to our Writer in Residence, Katherena Vermette. Find guidelines for submission on the writer-in-residence site: bit.ly/2JCNp45."

@austudentsunion tweets: "AUSU has proudly provided our members with access to Lynda.com for years. On July 30, this service is upgrading to LinkedIn Learning! Find out more at ([link](http://link:https://bit.ly/2YmI5Kb): <https://bit.ly/2YmI5Kb>) bit.ly/2YmI5Kb."



The Fit Student Finding Enlightenment

Marie Well



What I stepped into enlightenment; only for a few days—or perhaps just an evening. But those few days changed me forever. And now I long to return to that state of enlightenment, but this time, stay there for good. But staying there doesn't mean I sit still; it means I flourish at hyper-speed. It took work to enter that higher state, but the work brought me a peace—and an awareness—I'd never felt before; I started to see things from others' eyes. I used to complain that I took on the burden of blame during conflicts. I now took on the burden, but in a completely new way.

I now saw unbearable offences against me in a new light. For instance, I no longer saw my woes with my mother. Instead, I saw her woes with me. In fact, I saw everyone's woes with me. But this time, I saw those woes as ways to better myself, to give

more, and to love more.

The Bible says to walk the extra mile and not to judge others. But for my non-Christian readers, consider near-death experiencers' stories. Many of these near-death experiencers claim they entered a heavenlike realm during a temporary state of brain death.

These near-death experiencers often report meeting an angelic being who showers them with unconditional love. As the near-death experiencers explain to this angel reasons for good or bad deeds done, the angel empathizes 100%. I believe that's who we are meant to be to reach enlightenment: that angel.

And then I recalled another near-death experiencer's account. The NDE woman asked her angel, "What's the purpose of life?" The NDE woman said the answer was so simple, yet she wasn't allowed to take that answer back to earth. And she admitted she lost all memory of the answer once she awoke from death.

But I think this simple purpose of life is to turn the other cheek, to never judge others, and to walk the extra mile. In other words, give all you've got to the ones you love. And worry only about correcting your own faults. Don't give a second thought to the faults of others. Other people are on a separate journey from you. Their faults are their business only. If those people harm you, see them as ill children who throw up on you. You wouldn't puke back, would you? No! You'd have empathy instead. Better yet, you'd dwell on the child's redeeming qualities.

That's how we don't judge another.

And if others judge you, admit the slightest wrong you may have done and grow from it. Correcting your faults (but in a nonjudgmental way) is part of your journey. And, again, correcting others' faults is no-one's business but theirs.

With all this in mind, I suddenly could see all the heartache I caused others. I saw harmful acts I did that I hadn't before considered—even little things I had dismissed as harmless. And I no

longer harbored anger for hurts I perceived others doing to me. I now felt free. I saw through new eyes.

Further to that, I heard that many of our memories are false. That means many of us suffer unnecessarily. But I say most of our hurts are simply errors in our thinking.

In my moments of enlightenment, I challenged all my thoughts. As a result, I gave up the error of mindreading. Also, I grew less sensitive. So now, if I catch wind of a negative perception of me, I think to myself, “If there is a grain of truth in that, one way to fix it is by taking such-and-such action. But if I can’t fix it, then no need to harbor anger over a truth.”

But what about all the other mental errors humans can make? The existence of those mental errors tells me we all have lots of growth opportunities. Truly, our growth potential is unlimited.

But I had an urgency with my thoughts that required high energy. Think motivational speaker Gary Vaynerchuk. He’s “on” every moment of the day: high energy. That’s how I want to be: “on” but with a calm energy. And for all of us to grow enlightened, “on” is how we might all need to be—every moment of the day.

So now I’m reading a book on an author’s journey into enlightenment: Martyn Wilson. I hope to see how his enlightenment compares to my moments of heightened awareness.

In his book, *Enlightenment: The Keys to Consciousness*, the self-proclaimed “enlightened” author says, “Everything was peaceful and still and I began to look at the world through fresh eyes in a non-judgmental, non-prejudiced way. I was more accepting of other people’s beliefs, more compassionate and more understanding. I felt free for the first time in my life” (p. 5 of 201, 7%). I agree with his view: not judging others brings us freedom.

Wilson also says, “After many weeks and months of being in this [enlightened] space, I began to notice some changes within me. I struggled with bright colors and lights. I found loud noises, music and TV unbearable. I became really sensitive and emotional to the point where I could be watching a YouTube video and just suddenly burst into tears” (p. 5 of 201, 7%). During my own peak state of awareness, I thought of Mom’s heartaches, and I started to cry. I thought of many others’ heartaches, and I started to cry. All the missed opportunities for love brought tears to my eyes. It was such a raw, beautiful, self-aware feeling. And I’m glad I felt it now rather than the day they pass away. At least, now I can tell them now how much I love them every time I write. He adds, “With this energy came a sense of oneness with everyone and everything, a feeling of being a part of everyone and everything. I now know that everything is energy, every person, every animal, every tree, every plant, every object is all made of the same thing: energy” (p. 6 of 201, 9%).

In a Facebook video, I saw a young spiritual artist, Akiane, paint a picture of a flower. But before she painted the picture, she gently touched the flower in the tree. I could see how her gentle touch washed over the flower, and the flower seemed to bask in her affection. In that moment, for the first time, I could see emotion wash over a flower. I could feel its soul. I then realized I needed to treat everything, living or not, with the same gentle love Akiane gave that flower.

From the view of Martyn Wilson, “Enlightenment is the ... true acceptance of who you really are deep down in the very core of your being” (p. 6 of 201, 9%). From my point of view, we know ourselves best when unconditional love flows through us. And how could we not love ourselves when nothing but love flows through us? That’s the secret to self-love.

On a final note, the author asks, “Do any two enlightened individuals experience the same thing? The term ‘Enlightenment’ can mean many different things to many different people” (p. 11 of

201, 10%). Like the author, I believe I entered an enlightened state of thought, although temporary. It changed me with a new set of behaviors. But I long to re-enter that enlightened state. That remains my quest.

As for you, dear reader, may you discover your own brand of enlightenment along the way. The book that shed light on the path to enlightenment for me is called *Lessons for a Happy Marriage*. I hope you one day read it—and become that angel.

References

Wilson, Martyn. (2015). *Enlightenment: The Keys to Consciousness*. Publish Nation. E-book.



Fly on the Wall

Summertime: Timeless Moments of Inspiration

Jason Sullivan



What's in a moment? If it's a summer moment, there might be wisps of breeze in leaves and abundant sultry heat. Isn't a moment the ultimate timeless time frame; doesn't its passing nature transcend ordinary timed context? Measuring time at the best of times is a sticky philosophical proposition: “the measurement of time is puzzling in a way in which the measurement of space need not be (where the whole spatial object can be present now)” (Smart, J.J.C. 126). At AU, being present in the now at our study desk can be no steady task on a gloriously sweltering day.

Something intuitive and untrappable lingers with time on a summer's afternoon. Being students of time management almost as much as of our particular academic disciplines, summer provides additional challenges and opportunities—not only for our success, but for us to enjoy the ride. Each present tense only happens once, but we don't have to get all uptight about it. Summer's abyssal pleasure allows calm to wash over the essence of our being. It's alright to sometimes let our academic deadlines lapse and our life responsibilities evaporate—just for now, just for a moment, just outside of the frame of time. These times of timeless pause, not where a second hand lingers, quivers, and trembles awaiting the resumption of its inexorable march, can be priceless as we rejuvenate ourselves. Ever since childhood the advent of summer has carried implications for scholastic liberation. Remember those glorious ten weeks or so when no adult could ask us that timeless question: *aren't you supposed to be studying?* As adult students, we too can enjoy the break the season provides. We simply have to remember to put our coursework aside and embrace the inspiring inactivity summertime has to offer.

At AU, the struggle to chill and relax is real. Just to bask on a summer's day requires us to displace the eternal recurrence of that gnawing sense that maybe, just maybe, we really ought to be studying instead of kicking back. The trick is to put our studies on hold lest we feel the weight of, at some level, always being in class. On the bright side, at AU we also always *have* class. We're classy even though we don't physically attend class; distance education puts us in a class of our

own and we ought to be proud of ourselves. And even if we don't find that perfect bathing suit (or sculpt our bodies to match), we always have the success of our academic lives to fall back on.

Bored on a hot summer afternoon? There's always more coursework to do; it's like the dishes, though, once we sign up for such adulting we've bought the ticket and have to take the ride. But crawling into our study hole and waiting for the first touches of Autumn to creep in through the window, the shadowy gloamings leering closer by the day, may not be the ideal option. Summer is ready when we are, and enjoying it doesn't have to be a struggle; nor does cramming it's empty spaces full of coursework need to be a prideful accomplishment. It pays to let go of our skilled, productive selves now and then. Perhaps within those warm summer breezes and their tendency to pacify our seemingly-better academic minds lies not contradiction but inspiration: summer can actually be the ultimate study environment if we get used to looking at the season that way. And part of being a successful student is being properly recharged.

A Song in the Heart, Joyful Breezes Through the Mind

A half century ago Ella Fitzgerald beautifully crooned:

“Summertime
And the living is easy
Fish are jumping
And the cotton is high
One of these days
You're gonna wake up singing
And spread your little wings and fly”

Why not wake up singing today, in midday, as though we'd slumbered through the hours until now, wiled them away slumped over in productivity? Our return to school via AU has already poured the foundation of our future success in life; summer can be a great time to marinate in our accomplishment as distance students. We flew from the nest of comfort and entered the jungles of academia. And we emerged stronger and unscathed! All is not buttercup selfies and ice cream cones in the song of AU life, however. Summer gives, at best, a brief pause or reset from our academic trials and tribulations. Our pedagogical reality is our constant companion; it remains through the seasons so long as we are registered in a course. But that fact doesn't have to prevent our enjoyment of lustrous summer days. In fact, becoming mindful of that constant niggling feeling that studying could be done at any time may help us identify ambivalence toward other people and the tasks we have in our lives. As a fortune cookie said somewhere, “The way we think one thing is the way we think every thing.”

What's certain to this “Fly on the Wall” is that being too much of our own taskmaster is pretty much a sure-fire ticket to distance education struggles. Sometimes it's best to just leave those textbooks untended and, like a fish lunging at a shred of BBQ prawn on a hook, seek an alternative current, a secondary stream forward, as we face the need (not only the want) to acquire additional AU credits. An hour's rest with a lemonade may be worth two hours of continued study drudgery. In fact, if AU ever feels like drudgery the worst you can do is reduce your studies to dishes status! Taking a break when it feels right, rather than when it's pre-planned, is a great summer task to set for ourselves. Let's embrace the path of least resistance; not procrastination, but aversion to the age-old menace: guilt!

Pleasure in Meaningless Pleasure

Pursuing gilded guilty pleasures, covered in gold and perhaps buried between two suspiciously thigh-shaped rocks in an Indiana Jones vault, may seem almost too decadent to do in our button-downed academic minds. Time itself is a classic example; we may feel like we don't have the time

to let up in our studies and, frankly, that may be true. But wait, it's freakin' summer! The seasonal fates are against us, so why not get counter-intuitive? Studying may not be easy this time of year, but that doesn't mean we have to try extra hard. Sometimes we need to just indulge ourselves and ward off deeper frustrations. There's such thing as being too good a student, after all.

When we become too good, or desire to be too good, our rock-solid ethical sensibilities may hold us back from becoming ourselves at our best. Likewise, without due care, our virtuous minds may prevent us from enjoying summer for what it is or can be if we choose to embrace its glow. When we affix meaning and morality to every act in our lives, such as when we cannot but wonder if our better selves ought to be studying rather than lounging, we risk missing out on the ephemeral joys that make summer a magical time for students of all ages. There's also such thing as too much studiousness, after all.

The Virtues of De-Moralizing Our Summer

Virtues can run a little too wild and lead to confusion masked in good intentions. The 20th Century philosopher GK Chesterton noted:

“G.K. Chesterton’s warning about ‘virtues running wild’:

The modern world is not evil; in some ways the modern world is far too good. It is full of wild and wasted virtues. When a religious scheme is shattered (as Christianity was shattered at the Reformation), it is not merely the vices that are let loose. The vices are, indeed, let loose, and they wander and do damage. But the virtues are let loose also; and the virtues wander more wildly, and the virtues do more terrible damage. The modern world is full of the old Christian virtues gone mad. The virtues have gone mad because they have been isolated from each other and are wandering alone (*Chesterton*, 26).”

Now, Chesterton was a Catholic (who also claimed that “Buddhism and Christianity are really the same.” (Kreeft, 122) but we don't have to take his word as limited to his particular faith. Secular humanists though many of us at AU be, the essence of moral judgement remains largely unchanged through the decades. Moralizing warnings of negative outcomes (such as telling ourselves to study now or suffer later), lest we stray from some straight and narrow ethical path, are pretty *de rigueur* wherever *Homo sapiens* abide. So let's enjoy some summer relaxation, in whatever way suits us, and see how that makes us feel when we do crack those textbooks again. This is not to say plan to realize some new truth in advance either, just do it when you feel like it and to hell with being virtuous about it!

Being a bit de-moralized may be key to summer liberation of mind and conscience. So let's consider a counter-virtuous approach to the virtue of taking a summer study break. To leave behind our normal expectations of ourselves, masked as they are in the virtue of imagining ourselves as academic savants, means to substitute some alternate virtues that will lead not only to run-of-the-mill productivity but stir up some inchoate inspiration. So just slam the textbook shut and enjoy some summer for as long as feels right! But will inspiration follow from unplanned whimsy? It may, and there's no methodology to prove or disprove it: we have to just try it out. We all know time flies when having fun but let's also remember that having fun isn't about turning on a mental light switch.

Time and the Studying Animal

In the meantime, it bears remembering that time itself is species dependent and, let's be honest, time also differs drastically betwixt human individuals and even within ourselves depending on what we are doing. There's that nasty straight line between drudgery and studying again; steer

away! At the general level, some folks really seem to live on island time, while others manage to accomplish things in their right way without seeming to be aware of the ominous, ticking, drumming, fingers of time passing away. To succeed at AU means to find what study mentality, and time management or intuition about such, works for us.

Enjoying summer may mean freeing our mental mooring from time constraints. And hey, do we ever really know what time it is in a universal way anyway? In his consideration of 'What it's Like to be a Dragonfly', Benedict O'Connell notes that when it comes to time, we just can't be sure if our minds are given any dose of accuracy in their sensory interpretation of what's going on out there in the world.

"Consider a human looking at a dragonfly whizzing past. They perceive the insect as moving at a certain speed; but other species' perception is different. For a turtle, it would appear to be moving at almost twice the speed; for many species of fly, ten times slower than for a human. This is due to animals' brains processing their visual experiences at different speeds. For instance, brains receive images from eyes a certain number of times per second: a human brain will receive, on average, 24 images a second, turtles 15, and flies 250. This idea goes some way to illustrate Kant's view of the subjectivity of time, as well as explaining why if you try to swat a fly you're unlikely to be successful" (O'Connell, online)

Whatever We Do, We Can Make it our Virtue

But we can't just thrust aside our watches or smartphones and let time as we understand it just be, either. To become consciously unconscious of something like a school assignment is no easy play; inspiration and creativity are not susceptible or reducible to an equation. Yet, it's ingrained into us to be time-aware, so the best thing we can do is accept the existence of plans and deadlines and then see if any inspiration alights upon our minds.

Immanuel Kant concluded essentially that "people impose certain basic features on the raw data of their sense organs because of the human mind's inbuilt structure" and, if we find the time to argue with him, we might best do it with reference to the poetic affluence of our imaginative unconscious. To this end the Caribbean poet Aime Cesaire announced: "reason, I sacrifice you to the evening breeze" (Cesaire, online). This sort of sacrifice, rather than being booked in advance, needs space to survive. Summer provides this relaxing climate of potential. While the season may not literally be a vacation for us as AU students, as its sweet embrace continues to unfold ephemeral magic, let's sacrifice the logic and reason of our study selves to the joyful exuberance of pleasurable play. And hey, who knows what new essay and assignment ideas might emerge when we just up and leave our coursework at a moment's notice.

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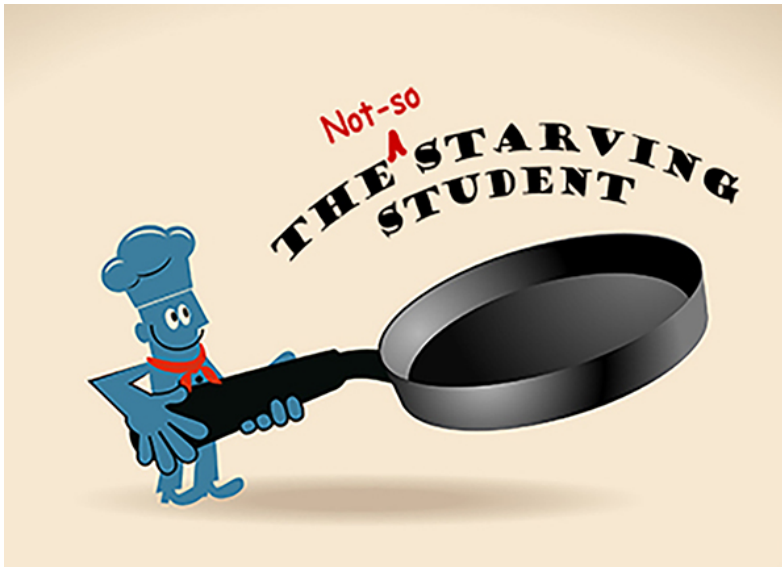
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Jason Hazel-rah Sullivan is a Masters of Integrated Studies student who loves engaging in discourse while working in the sunny orchards and forests of the Okanagan.



The Not-So Starving Student Make Your Frozen Pizza Gourmet

Xin Xu



For hungry AU students looking for a cheap way to have a nice fully loaded pizza, there is an economical way to make it yourself. Recently I had a craving for pizza but the pizza place was charging me \$2-3 dollars per topping (and they gave me so little last time). Luckily, I found a cost effective way to spice up that frozen pizza, and I'll share it with you.

DIY Gourmet Pizza

Start with a frozen pizza as a base. I picked up a deluxe Delissio pizza from my local grocery store, so you know it's not delivery.

The toppings on there are fairly sparse as you can see, but for about \$4, it was a good start. I also got the thin crust which comes in a square instead of a circle.



However, I decided to add some items I love including:

Onions - I picked up a small 3lb bag (came with about 6 of them) for \$3. I only needed one but I can use the rest for other cooking

Olives (personal preference) - I really like olives on my pizza but some people may not. If you don't, you can skip to the next step. They were sold out of the sliced ones so I picked up a can of whole pitted olives and sliced it myself. I did not use the whole can so I can use some of the olives for a Greek salad later.

Sausage - Time to add some meat toppings. They had a sale on smoked sausage for \$1, so I picked one up and sliced it myself.

The pizza is looking quite full, but still has room for a little more.



Extra cheese - I found a block of cheese in my fridge. It was unshredded, so I had to shred it myself. I put about a ¼ block into the pizza.

The box recommended I put it in the oven at 400F for 20 mins. I had extra toppings on there so I'll add an extra 5 minutes just to be safe.



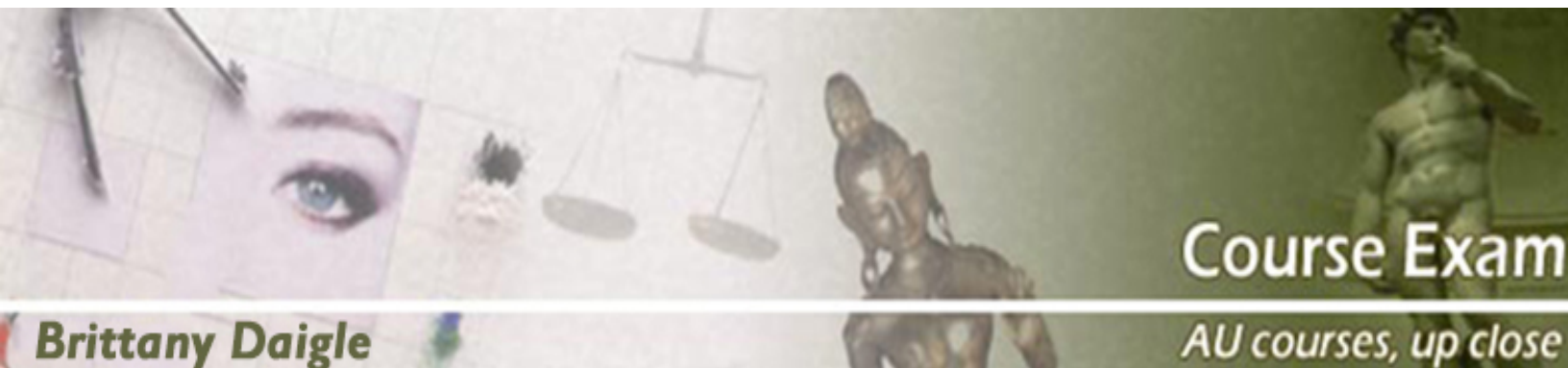
And now here is the lovely DIY gourmet pizza. It costs me less than \$10 in ingredients and about 5 mins of prep time plus 25 mins of cooking (and the time is comparable to delivery).

Frozen Pizza = \$4.00. Onions (1/3 of a \$3 bag) = \$0.50. Can of olives = \$1.50. Sausage = \$1.00 1/4 block of cheese \$2.00 (estimated). Total pizza cost = \$9.00.

And it's way better than delivery.

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





Course Exam

Brittany Daigle

ECON 248 (Macroeconomics) is a three-credit course that provides a basic introduction to the entire discipline of economics. The study of macroeconomics, microeconomics, or both can help students understand our society better. While microeconomics deals with individual decision makers in households, firms, and governments, macroeconomics deals with aggregates. ECON 248 looks at economy-wide variables, such as inflation, unemployment, balance of international payments, and how government policies affect these variables. This course goes in conjunction with ECON 247 (Microeconomics). There are no prerequisites and there is a Challenge for Credit option if students are interested.

Students should be diligent in studying Unit 1 of ECON 248. It not only provides students with a brief overview of microeconomics but is essential to understand of what follows.

Macroeconomics is made up of six units, six quizzes worth five percent each for a total of thirty percent, two assignments weighing ten percent each, and a final exam weighing fifty percent. The six units within this course cover topics such as monitoring macroeconomic trends and fluctuations, the real economy, the money economy, investments, unemployment, and more. To receive credit for ECON 248, students must receive a grade of fifty percent or higher on the final examination and achieve an overall grade of at least a "D" (50 percent) for the entire course. Registration in this course includes an electronic textbook and the examination for this course will be written in the traditional pen and paper format.

Shannon Steinke just finished her first year of the four-year Bachelor of Management program at Athabasca University. She briefly introduces herself, stating "I am currently a military member. The military is funding my schooling so I'm not technically working right now. I'm moving to North Bay from Barrie, Ontario next week. In my spare time I like to golf, curl, read, and play music."

When asked what she likes and dislikes about the Bachelor of Management program, she states "I wish the program had more Human Resources focused courses and less financial courses. I love the flexibility of online learning and I like managing my own schedule. However, I find online learning difficult when I need academic help, especially the time delay between asking a question and getting a response can really derail my progress."

She explains that ECON 248 "discusses Macroeconomic forces such as gross domestic product (GDP), international trade, banks, policy, and more."

As for the structure of the course, Shannon states "The course involved reading the textbook and completing practice exercises. My Econ Lab has some good practice questions and flash cards. It had two assignments that had ten short answer questions each. There is no midterm examination and the final examination was multiple choice and short answer questions."

When asked if she would recommend the course to other students, she states “I enjoyed the content of this course, but I found the textbook difficult to follow. It didn't elaborate on a lot of the main topics that came up in the assignments. I'm not sure I would recommend this specific course if someone had another similar alternative.”

As for tips and tricks to completing the course, Shannon explains that “because the textbook was hard to use, I ended up using Khan Academy a lot. It expanded on some of the topics and made them easier to understand.”

For those who are unfamiliar with [Khan Academy](#), it is a non-profit educational organization and website that has several videos and tools to help explain different subjects to students. Whether you are taking English, math, a specific science course, or music, Khan Academy will most likely have content explaining the concepts you are studying. I definitely recommend checking it out; it got me through some pretty difficult courses.

When asked how the communications with her tutor was, she states “For the most part I had good communications with my tutor and the turn around time for assignments and tests was reasonable. I waited quite a while near the end of the course, but it was during the convocation, so I assumed that had something to do with it.”

Whether ECON 248 is a degree or program requirement of yours, or the topics mentioned above are of interest to you, this course will have you learning a lot of interesting content surrounding the topic macroeconomics.

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



The Study Dude

Own the Mindset for Top Grades

Marie Well



You want to accelerate your learning, right? I watched a good friend gain mastery of PhD level subjects. She got fixated on her passion and mastered it over decades, gaining ground every watchful minute.

I want that for me, and I want that for you. I want us to give 110%. That requires zeroing in on our brain power.

When I entered university, to my shock, I scored top grades in university math. But I later switched programs and failed to achieve a

PhD in Communications. But with a different mindset, I may have reached my goal.

So, what does it take to reach *your* PhD potential?

Yes, it takes a certain mindset. But to achieve that mindset, we first need a foundation. Here are bits of that foundation, mostly from Ian Gibbs, author of *23 Tips to Learn Stuff Better*, and partly from me. These tips may help you nail an A to one day claim your dream career:

Ian Gibbs' first rule is "to own it." He says, "If it's important to get up early, then own it. Set your alarm clock (or two) and make sure you get enough sleep" (p. 2 of 115, 20%). Why? If you're regularly late for an AU Webinar, it can lower your grade. So, own it.

In life, similarly, every wrong we've done, we should own. Instead of letting our wrongs slide, we could work to better ourselves. Figure out where we went wrong and find solutions. And the next time we get assigned a task, ask ourselves, "How could I do the task better?" (p. 10 of 115, 26%).

Whenever I feel down about myself, I cheer up with the thought of "how can I perform better?" We can always make ourselves smarter, sweeter, and stronger. And my dad's missus says that when she does a task, she aims to do it well. If not, she asks, "Why bother?" So, own it.

Ian Gibbs says not to blame others for your mistakes: "The truth is you're the only one who can learn what you need to. No one can learn stuff for you" (p. 4 of 115, 21%). But do let the wise guide you. After all, wise people have better roadmaps. But where do you find these wise people? Luckily, many publish books. And for every hundred books we read, one or two may skyrocket your success. So, keep reading.

Ian Gibbs says let your passions boost your academic edge. "If you're interested in chemistry or geography or English literature, then good for you. Enjoying the subjects you have to learn is a big help. But what about if the things you're interested in aren't on your school syllabus? Learn as much as you can about whatever it is that does interest you If you continue learning, after a while you'll discover you've become an expert compared to the rest of your class" (p. 15 of 115, 29%). Take career aptitude tests. They'll help you study disciplines that stir passion. My personality type gets passionate about marketing. I just wish I had known this sooner.

Learn from extracurriculars that overlap with your studies. A "reason to learn extracurricular stuff is that, although it might seem extracurricular to you, it probably ties in with stuff that is on your curriculum" (p. 16 of 115, 10%). Gibbs believes that your extracurricular will eventually overlap with your studies. Extracurricular stuff is fun. But I say go nuts on extracurriculars tied *directly* to your studies. If you are studying law, join the debate club. If you're studying kinesiology, join a wrestling team. And if you're studying communications, join toastmasters. Pick an extracurricular that'll boost your GPA.

Consider double majors that don't lead to dead end careers. Some academic fields scream for more than an extracurricular. They pine for a double major. Math on its own doesn't seem to have the best career outlook, but a math and finance double major can turn you into a powerhouse. Statistics goes great with a psychology or sociology degree. English and art make for a great double major. And business goes with most anything. If you're in a dead-end department when it comes to careers, consider the double major.

Whatever you choose, know that every success comes with at least one fall. So, own your mistakes to get your A's.

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Dear
Barb

Barbara Godin

Winds of Change

Dear Barb:

Hi, I hate to bring this up, but my husband needs to learn something about social etiquette. I don't mean just manners; I mean passing air and burping! When we were dating, he had excellent manners, except for the occasional passing of air, which was understandable. Now he doesn't care where he is or who is around, if he has to break wind, he does. They are not the silent ones either. It is so embarrassing, but not to him. When he is around his family, they all laugh, it's just something they do. We have two sons, and I can already seeing it happening with them. If I try to talk to my husband about it, he says I'm just overreacting, and that farting and burping are a normal part of life, so I need to get over it. Doesn't anybody have manners anymore? What do you think? Am I overreacting? Thanks Tina.

Hey Tina:

Interesting topic, pretty sure this is the first time for this column. Flatulence and burping are a normal part of everyday life and it definitely has to be released. Research says that most people fart between 14 and 23 times a day. It may seem like a lot, but some just slip out and you may not even realize it. Basically, farts are swallowed air that is

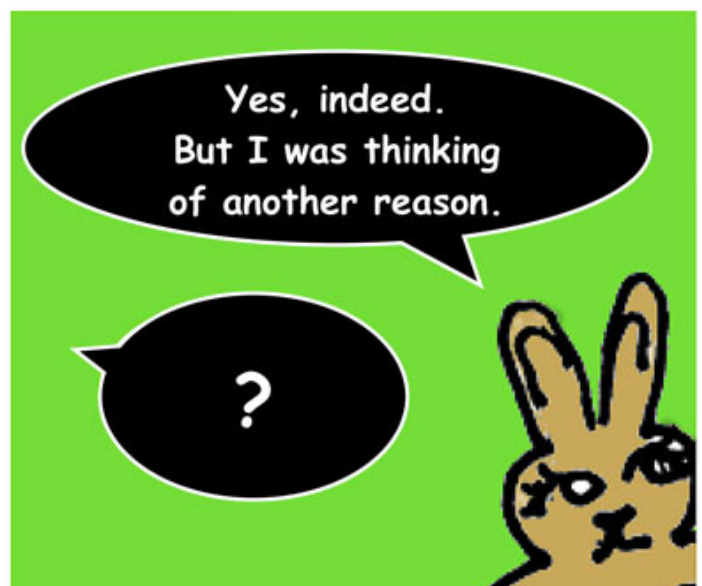
introduced into your digestive tract through eating and drinking. Most are odorless, but depending on what you eat, they can be foul smelling, for example animal proteins like meat and eggs produce more smelly farts than fruits and vegetables. There are things your husband can do to reduce the amount of gas he produces, although I'm not sure that is a concern that he has. But I will include ways to reduce gas and you can pass this column along to him; you never know, he may make some changes. Chewing gum will increase the amount of gas in your system, as you are swallowing more air. Eating slowly and taking the time to chew your food will reduce the amount of gas in your digestive tract. Be aware of gas producing food and drinks such as beans, broccoli, whole grains, carbonated drinks, milk cheese, ice cream and fruit. Unfortunately these are all foods which are necessary for a healthy diet. As to fart etiquette, did you know in some cultures (such as the Inuit of Canada) farting after a meal is interpreted as gratitude for a great meal. Obviously, this isn't common throughout all cultures, though. I personally agree that passing gas of any kind should not be done in social settings. In your own home, I think that's a personal choice with whom you choose to share your farts. So I do not think you are overreacting. Thanks Tina.

Email your questions to voice@voicemagazine.org. Some submissions may be edited for length or to protect confidentiality; your real name and location will never be printed. This column is for entertainment only. The author is not a professional counsellor and this column is not intended to take the place of professional advice.



Poet Maeve
Loving Life

Wanda Waterman



The information on this page is provided by the AU Students' Union. The Voice does not create this content. Contact AUSU at services@ausu.org with any questions about this article.

IMPORTANT DATES

- **July 31:** [Deadline to apply for course extension for Sept](#)
- **Aug 9:** [AUSU Student Social in Calgary](#)
- **Aug 10:** [Deadline to register in a course starting Sep 1](#)
- **Aug 13:** [AUSU Annual Members Meeting](#)
- **Aug 15:** [Sept degree requirements deadline](#)
- **Aug 31:** [Deadline to apply for course extension for Oct](#)

NEW - LinkedIn Learning

AUSU has offered our members FREE access to video training through Lynda.com for over 6 years. **On July 30, your Lynda.com access is upgrading to LinkedIn Learning!**

What does this mean for YOU?

- Free access to industry-leading training videos and content from Lynda.com.
- Highly personalized learning experience.
- Insight-based recommendations to make your learning more relevant and applicable.
- Learn wherever you are, whether that's on the mobile app or on a browser through LinkedIn.
- Tie LinkedIn Learning courses to your goals and career development plans.
- Simple direct sign on with your @athabascau.edu email address.

How will the upgrade work?

- Students with an existing Lynda.com account will receive an email on July 30 to upgrade their account to LinkedIn Learning, and their course progress will transition with them.
- As of July 30, students who had not yet accessed this free service can set up an account with LinkedIn Learning for FREE [here](#) using their Athabasca University student email account.

If you have any questions, visit our website [here](#) or email services@ausu.org.



Calgary Student Social

AUSU is holding a **student social event in Calgary on August 9!** All AU students are welcome to attend!

The event is come and go. Come on out to chat with fellow students, get some **free** swag and pizza, or try your hand at the arcade or a game of pool!

When: Friday, August 9 from 5:30 - 8:30 pm MDT

Where: [The Rec Room Calgary](#), 1180 - 901 64 Ave NW

Please RSVP to services@ausu.org or on our [Facebook event](#) if you plan to attend!



NEW Executive Blog

This month, our AUSU President shares his experience as an AU student and shares some great tips for juggling your studies with all of your other life responsibilities.

Check it out the Exec Blog on our website [here](#).



CLASSIFIEDS

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

THE VOICE

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