



# THE VOICE

Vol 27 Issue 48 2019-12-13

## **Minds We Meet**

Interviewing Students Like You!

## **The Travelling Student Returns**

Where's he off to this time?

## **Advice Column**

No Advice is Better

*Plus:*

*Vintage Voice-Friday 13th Edition!*

*Course Exam-Psych 356*

*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](http://voicemagazine.org),  
and please indicate if we may publish your letter!**

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

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

## Editorial

### Not So Unlucky After All

Karl Low



The more Friday the 13ths I'm exposed to, the less likely I am to believe they're unlucky. You, for instance, are lucky to get this issue of *The Voice Magazine* because I'm thinking it's going to be one of our stand-outs of the year. The only unlucky thing about it is that it's coming out so late in the year most people probably won't consider the articles in it for our upcoming Best Of issue. (An issue, by the way, that I'm still looking for input on, pick out those articles you really think deserve a wider audience and let me know – we'll pick the best of the best and republish them in the first week of January.

But in this issue, to start, we have our feature interview with student Laura Szabo. What struck me about this one was how well Laura was able to demonstrate her own self-awareness in the context of our questions. To be asked the question what moment caused you most to doubt your educational career and be able to respond, and explain, an incident in the 8th grade made me take notice. How many of us, without professional help, can look back on our lives and rationally spot isolated incidents that may have affected us for years, even decades thereafter?

We follow it up with a Porkpie Hat that just happens to be one of the most insightful pieces I've read in a long time. I sometimes wonder if people might question my decision to keep running things like the Porkpie Hat, it's not that tied to AU or the student body, after all, but then I get submissions like this one, and frankly don't really care what anybody else has to say. It's good writing, and I think it's something that students deserve to be able to read.

And, if that isn't enough, we have the return of the Travelling Student. Many of you may not know, but several years ago we ran a bunch of articles from student Philip Kirkbride, who took us along with him as he'd taken his courses with him while travelling around the world. Well, Philip's back, now in graduate studies at AU, and he's decided it's time to start travelling again, this time down to Mexico. I'm hoping he'll have another set of adventures to bring us along with him, and maybe inspire us to go beyond the usual with our studies. After all, we have this great advantage at AU of not being tied to anywhere while we study, why not fully utilize that?

Meanwhile, it seems with the recent UK election, we're about to finally put to the test whose theories are the best match with reality. Boris Johnson's large victory there means Brexit is now assured, with #Scexit and #NorIrExit hashtags soon to be seeing some prominence, if the trends continue as they have. (Also, for the record, this new habit we have of mashing parts of multiple words together into a hashtag really has to stop. I know language can be fluid but without stability, we'll all just end up talking past each other with nobody having any idea of what anybody else is trying to say. Okay, some might argue that's happened already anyway, but...)

I do wish the people of the UK the best of luck. I'm on the side that is predicting they'll be regretting this in a few years, and given as they're a nuclear power, we may all end up regretting that. So even though being wrong means I may need to shift a large section of my world view, I'm really hoping I'm wrong. But hey, it's Friday the 13th, so, uh, yay? Until then, though, enjoy the read!

PS! Don't forget there's a Council Meeting on Monday, where Council will have the first reading of some changes to the Bylaws. These changes will affect who can run for AUSU Council in the upcoming AUSU election, so if you're interested in doing that, it would be a good time to stop in and ask any questions you might have! Go to <https://www.ausu.org/governance/meeting-agendas/> for more information.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Karl', located in the bottom right corner of the page.



# MINDS WE MEET



*Laura Szabo lives in Halifax, Nova Scotia and works as a full-time administrative assistant. She is currently enrolled in the Bachelor of Health Administration program at Athabasca University. This is her story.*

**Can you give us a little bit of background information about yourself? Who are you? Where do you live, where do you come from? What program are you in?**

My name is Laura Szabo, and I am from Halifax, Nova Scotia. I am currently doing my Bachelor of Health Administration part-time while I work full-time as an Administrative Assistant for the Victorian Order of Nurses of Canada in Halifax. I am a 22-year-old woman trying to balance all aspects of my life and focusing on self care and growth.

**Could you 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 Bachelor of Health Administration program?**

When I graduated from high school, I wasn't sure what career path I wanted to do. I had always wanted to be a nurse like my mother, but a benign hand tremor that I have had my whole life prevented me from completely steadying my hands (dexterity and control would be very important when giving a patient a needle, I imagine!)

When that plan fell through, I enrolled in Medical Office Administration at Nova Scotia Community College. For my work placement, I chose to go to the Victorian Order of Nurses (VON), as I was interested in working for a non for profit- I thought that it would be rewarding. After being hired during my work placement at VON, I accepted the position as Administrative Assistant I and began working at the front desk at the Halifax site. I come from a family of high achievers and academics. I had always felt insecure about being the first person in my family to not have gone to university, but I felt that insecurity alone wasn't a good reason to pursue higher education. After some time at my job, I began to accept the role of taking on college students at the front desk to shadow me for their work placement. I really liked the mentorship and leading aspect of that, and I decided I am interested in leadership and management. That realization gave me that extra push to look into part time university degrees. Health Administration at Athabasca seemed like a natural fit and I am enjoying it so far!

**Do you have any advice for people who are on the fence about going back to school?**

My advice to anyone who is on the fence about upgrading education or starting something new would be to do it for yourself, this is your education, your interests and your development. Don't let anyone pressure you into doing something that you don't want to do.

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

When the time comes for me to finish my degree, I would like to stay within my organization (VON). I am not sure where my career path will take me, and I am still early on in my degree. I am excited to continue to learn about career opportunities for someone in my field. My dream job would be one that enabled me to lead staff and still have some face to face connection with clients and patients.

**What do you do like to do when you are not studying? Any hobbies?**

When I am not studying, I like to visit my grandfather, who I am very close with. I like to cook and like to try new recipes when I have time. I recently bought a pasta machine and am going to try making homemade pasta next. Other than that, I like to go on drives and short road trips across my beautiful province.

**What is one of your favorite recipes that you have tried? Where do you tend to find your recipes?**

My favorite recipe that I have tried is chicken paprikash. A classic Hungarian dish, but it is not a family recipe. I got this recipe from the Betty Crocker International Cookbook of all places! It's very authentic. I am always looking on Pinterest for new things to cook. Sometimes it doesn't turn out, especially when I try to substitute dairy products for other things. I am lactose intolerant, so I have to be crafty when modifying recipes.

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

Family members past and present have influenced my desire to learn. I come from a family whose academic history involves Harvard graduates, PhD's and master's degrees. I have always felt like somewhat of a black sheep since my desire to learn has not been as strong as other family members. However, as time goes on, my desire to learn is becoming stronger. I would like to think this desire, at least in part, comes from within.

**Could you describe your experience with online learning so far?**

I really like the self paced nature of online learning. I like being able to pick it up and put it down when I need to. Working full-time while doing school can be very tiring, and some nights I just need to rest up and take a break from studying. This program allows for that. I never thrived in the classroom environment, which often goes hand in hand with learning. I am now empowered to learn outside of the classroom environment.

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

When I was in middle school, my grade 8 teacher took me out in the hallway in the middle of class and asked me what I wanted to be when I grew up. I told her I wanted to be a nurse, and she told me I wasn't smart enough to go to University. I was mortified and humiliated. After that talk, my self confidence and grades dropped. Those words stuck with me for years to come and played a role in my choice to not go to University out of high school. I scraped by and settled with that. I continued to scrape by in college attendance and grades wise. Once getting my first professional job, my confidence was greatly boosted, and I saw myself as someone who was capable and smart for the first time in a long time. After a few years of building up that confidence, I thought about what the next step would look like for me career wise. I thought about University, and I heard those negative words from my teacher in a back of my head. After some encouragement from my family, I put those doubts aside and took a leap of faith in myself and this degree. I love the program I am doing now, and believe I most definitely am smart enough to go to university.

**What's your favorite AU course that you have taken so far, and why? Would you recommend ENGL 255 to other students?**

I really enjoyed ENGL 255 (Introductory Composition). After being out of school for a few years, my writing skills were a bit rusty. That course helped me get back into the flow of writing. I would recommend that course to anyone who is looking to brush up on their English writing skills.

**Have you given up anything to go to AU? Was it worth it?**

I have given up my free time. In my free time off from work, I am either studying or thinking about studying. I also miss out on hanging out with friends. A chunk of my salary goes to my tuition, so I miss the extra spending money. All these sacrifices are worth it. It was my choice to go back to school, so I must own it.

**How do you find communications with your course tutors?**

Communication with course tutors depends on the course. Generally, communication from staff is satisfactory. Follow up from instructors is very important to me since I am not in a physical classroom. Lag in communication makes me feel somewhat forgotten about. Any questions that I think they can't answer, I will ask on the Athabasca Student app. Other students are helpful. It feels like Athabasca has a strong student community even though a lot of students are doing distance education and are far away from one another.

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

I would love to have lunch with Casey Kasem, the host of American Top 40. He has since passed, but he used to be the host of a radio show that my Dad and I used to listen to on the weekends. I love the sound of his voice and his unique way of telling stories. He seemed like an interesting person to get to know. I always joke that in another life, I was a radio DJ, preferably Casey Kasem.

**Could you describe the proudest moment in your life?**

The proudest moment in my life was my college graduation day. Despite facing much adversity, it was one of my first real "adult" accomplishments. Although I struggled through college, I persevered. I am glad I pushed through, because that college certificate got me to where I am today.

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

I have travelled a fair bit for someone my age. I feel very blessed to have seen what I have seen. I have been to across North America and to Europe. I went to Hungary in 2016 to meet my extended family for the first time and absolutely loved it. It was exactly how I imagined it, but way warmer. Currently, with studying and paying tuition, travel has been put on the back burner. When I finish my degree, I would like to celebrate by going back to Europe.

**Where would you like to travel to in Europe once you finish your degree? Do you have any bucket list travel destinations?**

I would like to return to Budapest, Hungary when I graduate. There was a lot I didn't get a chance to see, so I have a list of places that I would like to go to. My bucket list destination is Israel, I hope I make it there one day.

**What do you like most about travelling?**

My favorite thing about travelling is that I get a new perspective on life. I tend to live a bit of a bubble and travelling helps me get out of that.

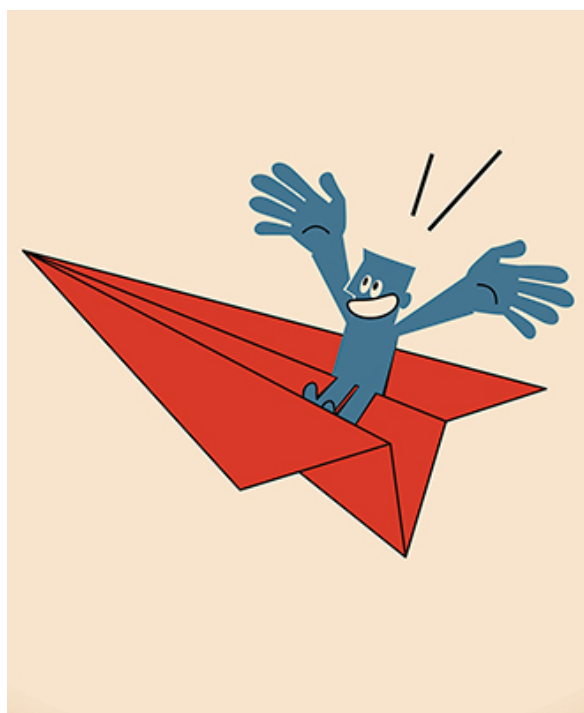
### What (non-AU) book are you reading now? Could you describe the book? Would you recommend others to read it?

I am currently reading *Maus* by Art Spiegelman. It is a graphic novel and details the story of Art's father, Vladek, as a Holocaust survivor and their strained father-son relationship. Art is a cartoonist, and gets his father agrees to have a graphic novel written about his life. All the Jews in the novel are represented as mice, and the Nazi's are represented in the form of large cats. The book is based on the true story of a Holocaust survivor, so it is naturally upsetting and unsettling. However, I would recommend this book for those who want to learn more about the Holocaust through a different medium.

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

## Travelling Student Returns

Philip Kirkbride



You've probably never heard of the travelling student, and I lay little claim to the title given how Athabasca has empowered so many students to study toward their degrees while travelling. But, between 2014 and 2016, I travelled across Quebec, Australia, and Thailand while working toward my degree in Professional Communications from Athabasca. During that time I regularly wrote articles for *The Voice Magazine* documenting my experiences as both a traveller and a student.

Shortly after that, I graduated, returned to Canada, and worked at a tech company, producing internet of things devices for two years. Since leaving I've started pursuing my Masters in Information Systems at Athabasca. I've also had the chance to co-author two books on the JavaScript programming language. Having a mixture of a tech and communications background, I've found the process enjoyable.

Having the writing bug sparked again I wrote a few articles for *The Voice Magazine* over the last month or two. It's a lot of fun writing free flow and getting to choose the topic more or less each time you sit down to write an article. This is unlike my experience co-authoring, where a single topic has to be written about for months on end.

Over the last month I was contacted by another publishing company asking if I'd be interested in solo authoring my own book. The editor helped me put together a proposal that is pending final approval before the contract is sent out. As writing and working on my graduate classes will be my main occupation over these next few months, I've decided to relocate to Mexico for the duration.

Tomorrow I will fly from Montreal to Mexico City where I hope to settle as my first location in the Southern Hemisphere. Admittedly I'm completely unprepared for the trip. My knowledge of Mexico City is limited at best, and my Spanish skills non-existent. That said, I hope to learn more as I go, and hopefully pass on things of interest.



I'll start my journey by finding a good location to stay in the Historic District of Mexico City. I'm told this is one of the top tourist destinations and safe by Mexican standards. How long I'll stay and where I'll go from there is yet to be decided. Mexico City has the advantage of having lots going on, and lots of options to choose from in terms of lodging, food, and transportation. On the other hand it is a loud mega-city and one of the more expensive locations in Mexico.

I'll be studying COMP 657 Artificial Intelligence: Principles and Techniques starting in January. During the course, I hope to produce research to present at The 5th IEEE Cyber Science and Technology Conference, which will be hosted by Athabasca University in Calgary, Alberta. I was excited and surprised when I found out the Science and Technology department at Athabasca would be hosting a conference, and one associated with a prestigious organization like the IEEE.

Though the course starts in January, the submission deadline for papers for the conference is February 15th. So, I've already started preparing based on a paper which I wrote during my previous class COMP 601 Research Methods in Information Systems. The paper deals with how websites with user accounts can make use of machine learning algorithms to detect account intrusion—that's when someone uses a stolen password to login to an account that isn't their own.

Since I'll be travelling/studying in a unique way I figured it would be a great opportunity to share that adventure through *The Voice Magazine*. I hope to write a mix of articles on travel, research, studies, and student issues. For those interested keep an eye out for my upcoming articles on the Cyber Science and Technology Conference as well as my journeys as a graduate student living in Mexico.

*Philip has returned for graduate studies at AU and a position on the AUGSA after taking courses and writing for the Voice in the past. He writes while travelling, which you probably guessed from the column's title.*

## Scholarship of the Week

Digging up scholarship treasure for AU students.

**Scholarship name:** POLAR Northern Resident Award

**Sponsored by:** Association of Canadian Universities for Northern Studies

**Deadline:** January 31, 2020

**Potential payout:** \$5000

**Eligibility restriction:** Applicants must be Canadian citizens or permanent residents, be long-term residents of Nunavut, Northwest Territories, Yukon, or the Provincial North, as identified by the Northern Boundary Map, and be enrolled full- or part-time at either a northern college or a Canadian university. See full eligibility criteria in the Full Guidelines.

**What's required:** An online application, including a proposal for a community outreach activity, a referee report, and academic transcripts.

**Tips:** Read the Application Instructions section of the Full Guidelines carefully.

**Where to get info:** [acuns.ca/awards-and-scholarships/cnst-awards/](https://acuns.ca/awards-and-scholarships/cnst-awards/)



## Porkpie Hat Advice Column

## Darjeeling Jones



Most often, when I come across an advice column, the words of wisdom promise to help the reader become more “successful” in some way. If you follow these suggestions, the implication goes, you will become wealthier / achieve higher grades / improve your job prospects / lose weight / gain more energy / reduce stress/ become more attractive / save your marriage / fix the environment / increase your life expectancy, etc. I often wish I had some such polished pearls of insight to toss your way, dear long-suffering reader. Sadly, my entire store of organizational strategies and life hacks pretty much boils down to “wake up and see what happens next.” In my opinion, it’s as good a philosophy as any other, and the only one I would ever be likely to stick to anyway.

So, that said, my intention with this column is to pass on a little piece of advice, which is as follows: try not to give advice. Unless it is explicitly requested, just don’t, okay? Following this suggestion will probably not help you gain any traction at all on the ceaseless grind towards self-improvement. You will not become any better-looking, or self-assured. You will not notice any improvements in your overall physical, emotional, financial, or spiritual health. It will not cause you to be perceived as a guru or the smartest person in the room.

Of course, advising people not to give advice is paradoxical, bordering on hypocritical. I have no excuse for that. I also have no excuse for the fact that my intention with this advice is purely self-serving and mercenary. It may, at some point, if we ever cross paths at a cocktail party, say, or find ourselves sitting side-by-side on bar stools, save me from being exposed to an unsolicited monologue. For that reason alone it is worth it to me, hypocrisy be damned. (Anyway, most of the time I can’t get through my morning coffee without an inconsistency or three.)

The thing about advice is that the person who gives it doesn’t have to live it. And from my experience, it’s more frequently offered in a spirit of self-aggrandizement and general know-it-allness than for any altruistic intention. Too often, the bestowing of advice is a gift bolsters the giver, and diminishes the receiver. I have been guilty of this far too many times in my own life, and I would like to apologize to all of those who were subjected to it. With every passing year, I am becoming more and more aware of how little I understand the intricacies of life, the vagaries of fate, the caprices of the heart and the soul. More and more, I am coming to the understanding that the most helpful thing I can do for others who are experiencing periods of emotional turbulence and perplexity is to keep my trap shut, my ears open, a box of Kleenexes at the ready, and the coffee pot warming. More and more, I am learning how to offer up a shoulder to cry on, and a pair of open arms to fall into when they are needed. I am awakening to the realization that I don’t know anything more than anybody else does, and that may be the most profound advice I can offer.



**Course Exam****Brittany Daigle**

PSYC 356 (Introduction to Personality Theories and Issues) is a three-credit, senior level psychology course that examines several theories of personality, including the key theorists and concepts associated with each theory, along with the strengths and limitations of each theory. PSYC 356 has no prerequisites, however, PSYC 289 (Psychology as a Natural Science) and PSYC 290 (General Psychology) are strongly recommended. There is also a challenge for credit option if students are interested.

If you would like to learn more in-depth information about the two recommended courses, read my PSYC 289 and PSYC 290 Course Exam articles.

Introduction to Personality Theories and Issues consists of six units, five quizzes worth a total of twenty-five percent, three essays worth twelve percent, thirteen percent, and fifteen percent respectively, and a final examination weighing thirty-five percent. The six units within this course cover a variety of psychodynamic theories, humanistic and existential theories, dispositional theories, biological and evolutionary theories, and learning-cognitive theories from a variety of well-known theorists, such as Sigmund Freud, Erik Erikson, B.F. Skinner, Abraham Maslow, and Carl Rogers. To receive credit for PSYC 356, students must complete all the quizzes and assignments, receive a grade of at least a "D" or fifty percent on the final examination, and receive a composite grade of at least fifty percent.

I am currently enrolled in the Bachelor of Arts double major in Psychology and Sociology program at Athabasca University. I enrolled at AU in November of 2016 and I am about halfway done. For work, I am the Vice President Finance and Administration for Athabasca University's Students' Union and I hold a spot on each of AUSU's three committees, chairing two of them.

I am currently taking PSYC 356, as it is a degree requirement of mine and it is also a requirement for AU's Master of Counselling Psychology program admission requirements, which I plan to apply to once I am finished my degree. So far, I am finding PSYC 356 to be a very interesting course, though there is a lot of content to remember. Enrollment into this course includes a physical textbook and a DVD of The Avengers: Age of Ultron.

The five quizzes within this course are five percent each and include twenty multiple-choice questions worth one point each and four short-answer questions worth five points each. There is no time limits on any of the quizzes and students are welcome to refer to the course materials to answer any of the questions. Each quiz covers a different section of the textbook.

The three essay assignments for this course fit together and build on one another. The first essay requires students to explore a specific personality theory applied to a superhero character. A list of possible superheroes is provided to students and all come from the Avengers DVD that comes with the course. The first essay must be between 750-1250 words in length and weighs twelve percent of your final course grade. The second essay explores a different personality theory applied to the same superhero character. This essay must be between 750 and 1250 words in length as well, and is worth thirteen percent of your final grade. The third essay provides discussion and concluding remarks, must be 400-750 words in length, and is worth fifteen percent of your final grade. Be sure to choose your superhero wisely as you will be analyzing the superhero that you chose throughout all three of your essays. Make sure you also manage your time so that you can receive feedback from one essay before starting on the next one. It is advised



that you discuss your choice of superhero and specific personality theory with your tutor before you write your essay, as your tutor can recommend sources for your research.

The final examination for PSYC 356 is a three-hour, closed book, invigilated online exam that covers the entire course. It is the students' responsibility to ensure that their invigilation centre is approved by Athabasca University and that it can accommodate online exams. The format of the exam consists of a multiple-choice component (fifty marks) and a written component (fifty marks). The written component includes both short-answer and short-essay questions, requiring students to define and/or explain the significance of terms, concepts, key theories, and theorists in sufficient detail. The exam questions are based on the learning outcomes, and key terms and concepts. In preparation for the final exam, students are advised to do a thorough review of the course content, including the textbook, learning outcomes, and study guides. In preparation for the exam, I recommend reviewing the key terms and concepts at the end of each textbook chapter, since they review the main points of the chapter.

There is a decent amount of writing within this course. Students could benefit from taking ENGL 255 (Introductory Composition) first as that course focuses on essay writing at the university level and it will give you a good idea of what quality of writing is expected. Also, I personally agree with PSYC 289 and PSYC 290 being strongly recommended, as those two courses provided a really good introduction to a lot of the theories and theorists mentioned in this course. I think I would have been really overwhelmed if I did not take those two courses first. If anything, I think PSYC 289 and PSYC 290 should be required in order to enrol into this course.

Whether PSYC 356 is a degree 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 of personality theories and issues.

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



## AU-thentic Events

### Graduate Student Research Series: A Gaybourhood Begins: Settlement and Community Building in Vancouver's West End

Mon, Dec 16, 2:30 to 3:30 pm MST  
Online, Hosted by AU Faculty of Graduate  
Studies

[www.eventbrite.ca/e/fgs-presents-the-graduate-student-research-series-featuring-tara-diakow-mais-2019-tickets-84612318723](http://www.eventbrite.ca/e/fgs-presents-the-graduate-student-research-series-featuring-tara-diakow-mais-2019-tickets-84612318723)  
Register online at above link

### AUSU December Council Meeting

Mon, Dec 16, 5:30 to 6:30 pm MST  
Online, Hosted by AUSU

[www.ausu.org/event/december-council-meeting-5/](http://www.ausu.org/event/december-council-meeting-5/)

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

### Live chat - Doctorate in Business Administration

Wed, Dec 18, 2:00 to 3:00 pm MST  
Online, Hosted by AU Faculty of Business  
[news.athabascau.ca/events/live-chat-doctorate-in-business-administration-20191218](http://news.athabascau.ca/events/live-chat-doctorate-in-business-administration-20191218)

Access through above link

### Holiday closures:

#### Athabasca University

Closed Wed, Dec 25 to Wed, January 1,  
inclusive

Reopens Thurs, Jan 2, 8:30 am MST

More info at:  
[news.athabascau.ca/announcements/holiday-closures-2019](http://news.athabascau.ca/announcements/holiday-closures-2019)

#### AU Library

Last day to order materials: Wed, Dec 18  
Closed Wed, Dec 25 to Wed, January 1,  
inclusive

Reopens Thurs, Jan 2, 8:30 am MST

More info at:  
[library.athabascau.ca/page/ann](http://library.athabascau.ca/page/ann)

#### AUSU

Closed Sat, Dec 21 to Wed, January 1,  
inclusive

Reopens Thurs, Jan 2, 9:00 am MST  
More info at: [www.ausu.org/event/ausu-winter-closure/](http://www.ausu.org/event/ausu-winter-closure/)

*All events are free unless otherwise noted*



## Fly on the Wall

Reduced to a Blurp, ad Finitum

Jason Sullivan



By choosing AU we've activated those essentially expansive impulses within us that make us who we are: special beings becoming something new and more with each day, year, and course. Without risking sentimentality, what are dreams but concrete expressions of our pursuit of excellence? It's worth defining ourselves, after all, according to who we want to be.

Here we are faced again with a challenge: can we succinctly tell our story and its themes without leaving out valuable vistas of our reality. On one side we could give merely give "just the facts, sir (or ma'am)", and on the other side, we'd have our

memoirs serialized and compiled into tomes completely beyond the scope of all but our most dedicated readership. Perhaps brevity really is the soul of wit; those who eat fortune cookies first will perchance agree.

If we're giving a biographical account of ourselves it helps to start from the beginning.

To explore this, I wrote two sentences that captured my early years in a nutshell. Their opposition was striking:

1) Jason was conceived in an apartment on the grounds of UBC, a few hundred metres from the counter-culture mecca known as Wreck Beach. He was subsequently delivered by the obstetrics of a Dr. Chong.

2) Jason's childhood was spent on a sheep farm in the Fraser Valley where he also tended chickens and a fruit orchard. He enjoyed reading library books and playing in forests.

Taken alone these phrases embody what can only be called contrapuntal distinction; they suggest divergent childhood worlds. I'm no autobiographer but to make the story make sense would require some explanation; in fact, *how* we describe our lives may be crucial to how we identify ourselves. How did we feel about our lives as they unfolded? The story of our life's being suggests an arcing progression yet it's up to us to make sense of the series of Etch-A-Sketch lines that illustrate our story. Like constellations in the night sky formed from imagined connections between disparate and distant stars, our personal fable is more than the sum of its parts. To tell our story is to see what appears when we have our truth to behold.

Big events, like our return to post-secondary, reflect brightest as the decades pass. And yet, many aspects of our identity precede our involvement. Take the meaning of your full name; what family and cultural bonds does it reveal? My registry in school by my middle name Hazel led most folks who've ever known me to know me as Hazel rather than Jason. The name comes from a male rabbit in the book *Watership Down* but many folks naturally hear it as a girl's name. This ontological promiscuity in terms of gendered names led me into curiosity towards sociology. After all, being called a girl clearly has no bearing on one's actual gender!

### Looking Ahead by Looking Back

At the other end of the biography spectrum, far from cover letters and personal synopses, is the final resting place of our identity: the epitaph. In terms of AU we may ask how we plan to imagine ourselves looking back on our distance education experience? At the far reaches of our lives, we

might imagine our geriatric selves gnawing on a wafer and writing a few words for our own gravestone.

The aphorism “people don't plan to fail; they fail to plan” springs to mind. Visualizing the identity of our future selves naturally improves our chance of succeeding at our goals. Yet to match honesty with idealism is more than a nice idea, it's key to making distance education work for us. Many students struggle at their coursework without a planned schedule. Epitaphs and cover letters are short not only for the expedience of their respective backdrops (stone or paper), but also because they are written to encapsulate themes. Oscar Wilde, for all his trials and tribulations, and regardless of his bedsheets being discussed in court and his manhood ridiculed in the press, left this world with a simple written gesture of himself to adorn his gravestone:

“And alien tears will fill for him, /  
Pity's long-broken urn, /  
For his mourners will be outcast men, /  
And outcasts always mourn.” (Wilde, 2013)

With hard work we can be sure to avert the sorrow that meets many who fail at distance education, and, at the conclusion of the AU portion of our lives, we'll display a sunny disposition. When others ask about our degree or diploma, we'll say how proud we are and maybe, just maybe, how the experience morphed us into a better version of ourselves. Whatever our identity embodies, AU can make the experience of life richer and more rewarding.

#### References

Wilde, O. In Turiano, V. (2013). '10 Great Literary Epitaphs'. *Paste Magazine*. Retrieved from <https://www.pastemagazine.com/blogs/lists/2013/11/10-great-literary-epitaphs.html>

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.

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

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

#### **AthaU Facebook Group**

Kayla is curious if students can do a major with two minors; a check with AU suggests not. Bee has just finished the first semester of AU studies and gives a summary of how it went. Leslie seeks info on how to print more than ten pages of a Vitalsource e-text at a time; crickets on this one so far.

Other posts include textbook errors, exam study tips, and courses HADM 400, PHIL 252 and 350, and POEC 230.

#### **reddit**

A student cautions other students to avoid a specific junior-level course (one reason: the first assignment is three essays!) Other posts include appeals for course suggestions (the word “easy” came up at least once.)

#### **Twitter**

@AthabascaU tweets: “As part of the 50th Anniversary celebrations at #AthabascaU, we’re looking to provide up to 50 bursaries to help our learners complete their degrees. More on [theAUHub.t.co/W5aqsluqsu](https://theAUHub.t.co/W5aqsluqsu).”

@austudentsunion tweets: “Did you know that #AthabascaU students get Office 365 for FREE? Find out more at <https://bit.ly/2ilXWXg>. #igo2AU #studentdiscounts.”



## The Study Dude

### Six Tips to Succeed with your Degree

Marie Well



Your education can take one year, four years, or more than a decade of your life. And the career that follows can last your entire life. So you want to get it right.

The book *51 Tips and Tricks to Help You Succeed in College* by Tevis Sherfield and Tyler Sherfield shows how. Their following six tips will help launch you on the right path:

**Tip one: emphasize others.** When you pursue an education to benefit others, everyone gains. On an individual level, I believe that when we pursue our degrees out of a desire to help others, we tend to feel less lonely, more fulfilled, and more motivated. Others matter when it comes to making meaning. Authors Tevis and Tyler Sheffield say to “prioritize relationships with God and people in everything you do. Whether in school or in any stage of life, relationships **MUST**

be the driving focus of your life. When you make building relationships with God and others the focus for why you are in school, you gain a deep sense of fulfillment that no amount of test scores can give” (91%).

**Tip two: focus on interests.** Relationships matter, but so do your interests. The ultimate degree taps into your interests while offering a financially stable career path. The business school tends to give students an edge finding work, according to job descriptions on indeed.com. But authors Tevis and Tyler Sheffield advise you “to choose your major based on what you like to do, not on what you think will make you money. Doing the things you like will create a more positive attitude, more motivation, and in turn will lead to making more money anyway” (32%). But if your interests also make you money, you’ve got double the glory.

**Tip three: switch majors if needed.** Some students take a year off to figure out what degree to pursue. It’s wise for these students to take career tests and interests tests online, even ones with fees. But even after deciding on a career path, “don’t be afraid to change your major. According to the National Center for Education Statistics, 80% of all college students change their major at least once. It’s better to spend a semester or two finding out what you want to do than spending a lifetime doing what you hate to do” (75%).

**Tip four: get Dropbox.** Every student can benefit from a cloud-based storage system. “Dropbox is an online storage system. By saving your work to Dropbox, you will have access to your files anywhere you have internet access, even if it’s on someone else’s device” (90%). Have you ever had your computer die the day before a paper comes due? Or have you ever packed your term paper in your backpack, the night before the due date, checking your bag three times, only to find the term paper missing the next day? Dropbox prevents these scenarios from snatching away the A grade you deserve. If you don’t like Dropbox, check out some of the other cloud based storage systems like Google drive or Onedrive.

**Tip five: buy chalkboard paint.** Another way to boost your grades involves your wall, but pays off beautifully. “Paint an entire wall in your apartment or house with chalkboard paint. (if your



landlord allows painting). Then write your notes, math and physics problems, or whatever you want all over the wall. It's fun, it increases your contact because you see it everyday, and when people come over it will make you look like a genius!" (47%). Certain chalkboard paint can be applied to wood, metal, masonry, drywall, plaster, glass, concrete, and more.

**Tip six: use Khan Academy.** If you are chasing a science or math degree, you can benefit from free online tutorials. The Sherfields recommend to "Use Khan Academy. I found this my second year in college, and it was a life saver. This is an online source of educational videos that do an AMAZING job at explaining things. I can't believe they still offer this stuff for FREE! Check it out at <https://www.khanacademy.org/>" (46%). Khan Academy offers polished and professional instruction that help students excel.

Clearly, your education paves your future. Find out what you love in order to help whom you love. And hope whom you love likes chalkboard walls.

#### References

Sherfield, Tevis, & Sherfield, Tyler. (n.d.). *51 Tips and Tricks to Help You Succeed in College*. E-book.



## The Not-So Starving Student Why Self-Serve Food is so Appealing

**Xin Xu**



*Hotpot allows you to select your own ingredients (oftentimes in unlimited amounts!) and customize your dipping sauces.*

While traditional sit-down restaurants are still standard, a new style of eating has emerged in the last decade that has appealed to many millennials and members of generation Z. Particularly, there is a certain appeal to sitting down at a restaurant and being somehow involved in creating your own food in front of you. Whether it's buffets, hot pots, korean barbeques or self-serve yogurt bars, people are turning more to these novel options to enjoy their meal. Some might believe this creates more effort and hassle for the hungry customer, but for many, this is the perfect recipe to engage your customers and have them coming back over and over again. So why are these self-serve food restaurants becoming trendy?

**Choice.** Handing the power to the consumers as to how they'd like to prepare their food is, in itself, very appealing; even though ordering from a traditional menu means you also have the ultimate say. But there's often a disconnect between what we expect from the menu options and what people get when that plate arrives. Take, for example, sitting down at a mediocre restaurant. When you see that "seafood pasta" you might have one of two different expectations; either you



might have a high expectation of what that plate looks and tastes like relative to its value on the menu or you might have a rather low expectation of what that final dish will be like. Either way, there's a likelihood of your expectations not being fulfilled. Partly because you had little or no say in things such as how much salt was added, or what ingredients were used. However, when we flip the traditional model on its head, many people feel more engaged when provided with a choice. They might dislike what they've created in the fondue but at the very least that choice is perceived to be more in their own direct control.

**Interaction.** Not to say that there aren't a lot of engagement opportunities from some other restaurant styles, such as from Michelin star restaurants that will serenade you while you eat or restaurants that give you a live theatre performance, however, nothing quite compares to the idea of being able to interact more intimately with your food. A customers' interaction with a certain piece of German Bratwurst at the buffet is undoubtedly more sincere than that of a fully served plate with a side of Bratwurst. The reason is because the customer was involved in physically walking to the



*Korean barbecue is a highly interactive experience where you mix your own sauces and cook the meat the way you want*



*This local vermicelli joint allows customers to build their own vermicelli bowls, select individual broths and add the ingredients into a boiling clay bowl of soup!*

buffet counter, deliberating actively, envisioning themselves taking a bite and finally picking a piece to fill their plate. The level of interaction makes eating fun.

**Variation.** No two plates at a buffet look quite alike. Even though the plating might not look like the five-star Michelin level of gourmet, it certainly offers more variation than sitting down and knowing exactly what items you'll pick. The variation is stimulating for many foodies such as myself. The element of suspense builds into your entire eating experience and makes it that much more memorable.

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



## The Fit Student

### The True Source of Self-Esteem

Marie Well



I saw a near death experience (NDE) where a woman became selfish afterward. Most people who come out of an NDE become more selfless. Not this female.


When she spoke she emphasized the word "I." She wore her self-esteem like armour, like a deep pride. Her husband had left her, so she made a shopping list of what she expected from her next partner. Not one word about what she had to offer him. I spent days trying to figure out how selfishness could lead to a higher purpose or a meaningful relationship. Despite her imperfection, the woman struck me as wondrous, lively, full of purpose. At the

very least, she had high self-esteem.

I wondered, why would her NDE direct her toward selfish ambition?

And then I saw another NDE that said the more self-love we have, the more love we have to give others. Perhaps that was the missing link. The woman with selfish ambition emanated high self-esteem, possibly self-love. Maybe her self-love meant she had more love to give others.

But I believe the reverse holds true. The more love we give others, the more our self-love grows. And then, the more our self-love grows, the more love we have to give others. In other words, love for others comes first. And then the cycle of love snowballs into an avalanche of love.

But, to me, to grow self-love, it's important to  avoid stepping into sin. The Bible says the narrow, more disciplined path is better than the wider, more undisciplined one. By making healthy choices for ourselves, we keep our self-love ballooning, awaiting its moment to be lavished on others.

But I still wondered why the one woman's NDE led to high self-esteem and selfish ambition

So, I wondered what exactly defines self-esteem. I looked at the origins of self-esteem: "In the 1950's Carl Rogers, at the University of Chicago, introduced the idea of self-esteem. His idea was that children should be raised in an environment of 'unconditional positive regard,' which would lead to them developing a positive image of themselves, which in turn would lead to all sorts of good outcomes in life. If children developed high self-esteem, they would get the success they wanted, they would be happy, they would have positive relationships with other people, and be able to reach their full potential in all aspects of their life" (17%). But it didn't turn out this way.

As it turned out, psychology soon deemed high self-esteem to be less esteem-worthy: "Baumeister started to research the matter further, and found that aggressive and violent people, ranging from playground bullies to criminals and even dictators, did not have low self-esteem. Instead, they had a quite positive image of themselves, and in fact, by the definition of the term at the time, a high self-esteem" (19%).



Furthermore, “there was now another word for people who thought very highly of themselves, namely: Narcissists” (27%). Thus, “thinking a lot about our own value is something in itself to avoid” (49%).

I believe it's the givers, not the recipients, of love and praise who develop true self-esteem, which I liken to self-love. I believe the secret to nurturing true self-esteem in children is to teach them to give love and praise to others. And there is always a potential recipient. You could shower love on the neighborhood birds by feeding them bird seed.

But lavishing praise on others may not offer the impact we seek: “It can feel really good to hear that we are fantastic, amazing, beautiful, smart, or whatever it may be, especially when this feedback comes from others. It certainly speaks to us on a superficial level. The problem is, like with cocaine, the long-term effects can be... let's just say ‘less than positive’” (57%). For instance, we may guard our identity of being smart by not taking risks, which stifles our intellectual growth. But the praise we give others for their ‘efforts’ and for their ‘strategies’ leads to a positive growth mindset, according to Carol Dweck (as cited in Kaye, 2016).

Thus, love for others fosters self-love. And praise for efforts fosters true self-esteem. But what about selfish ambition? What good is that?

There is evidence that selfless—not selfish—ambitions make us happier: “What type of actions make us happier then? Lyubomirsky has conducted several studies and from these I will give you just a few examples: Expressing gratitude, carrying out acts of kindness, nurturing social relationships, learning to forgive, physical activity, committing to your goals” (70%). Mostly selfless acts.

I'd give the woman's NDE half marks. Yes, it's important to feel self-esteem and have ambitions. But she missed out on the most meaningful part: love for other souls.

#### References

Kaye, Martin. (2016). *Self-Esteem Mastery: What Healthy Self-Esteem Is and How to Get It*. E-book.



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

Friday the 13th rolls around at least once—and as many as three times—per year. We bravely peered in the vault for what our writers past have thought of the day.

**You have nothing to fear but...** Maxie van Roye examines paraskavedekatriaphobia (fear of Friday the 13th.) “While admittedly nothing bad has ever happened to me—or anyone I know—on that day, *you never know*.” Running Scared, August 13, 2010.

**If it's Friday the 13th, this must be 'Dover.** Writer Barbara Lehtiniemi reminisces about an Ontario tradition for Friday the 13th: motorcycles. “Along the way, a few other motorcycles join us. Others zip by trailing a high whine of acceleration. At each crossroads more bikes join the swelling parade.” Leather up for Friday the 13th, October 13, 2017. (This article couldn't have been too unlucky, as it was a finalist for a PWAC 2018 writing award.)



Dear  
Barb

Barbara Godin

## Stolen Friendship

*Dear Barb:*

*I work part time in an office and a good friend of mine also works there. We have been friends for 10 years and get along great. We both applied for jobs at the same place and we were so surprised that we both got in. I am a mother of two young children and a part time student as well. Kara has no children, but is also a student. We are both struggling financially, but we have everything we need.*

*Recently I have noticed that Kara is taking a lot of supplies home from the office. At first, I thought it was just the odd thing and maybe some paper, or pens, but it seems to be escalating. For example, last week she took home, three reams of 500 printer paper, and an entire box of file folders, and that's only what I saw, she definitely may have taken more items. When I mentioned something about it, she said, "they don't need it, they've got lots of money." The worst part is that she is selling these items online, which I just happen to see while browsing on facebook marketplace. The business that we work for is a small local shop and the owners work in the shop. I feel like I am between a rock and a hard place. I don't want to lose my friendship, but I don't feel what she is doing is right. I need some advice!*

*Thanks, Danielle.*

Hey Danielle:

You are in a difficult spot, should you do what is morally right and lose your longstanding friendship, or do you ignore what your friend is doing and perhaps try to encourage her to stop. Without a doubt, she will eventually get caught, and in all likelihood the owners will charge her with theft, as obviously she is stealing enough items that would warrant her selling them online. She could end up in a lot of trouble, possibly even going to jail.

On the other hand, if she were to stop now, before the missing items make too big of a dent in inventory, she may be able to move forward and maintain her job without being discovered. If she continues stealing and you don't come forward, there is a good possibility that because of your close relationship, the owners will assume you knew what was going on, or maybe even participated in helping your friend to steal these items, thus putting your job in jeopardy. I think your only option is to advise your friend to stop, and if she doesn't, you are going to have to talk to the owners about what she is doing. The choice is yours.

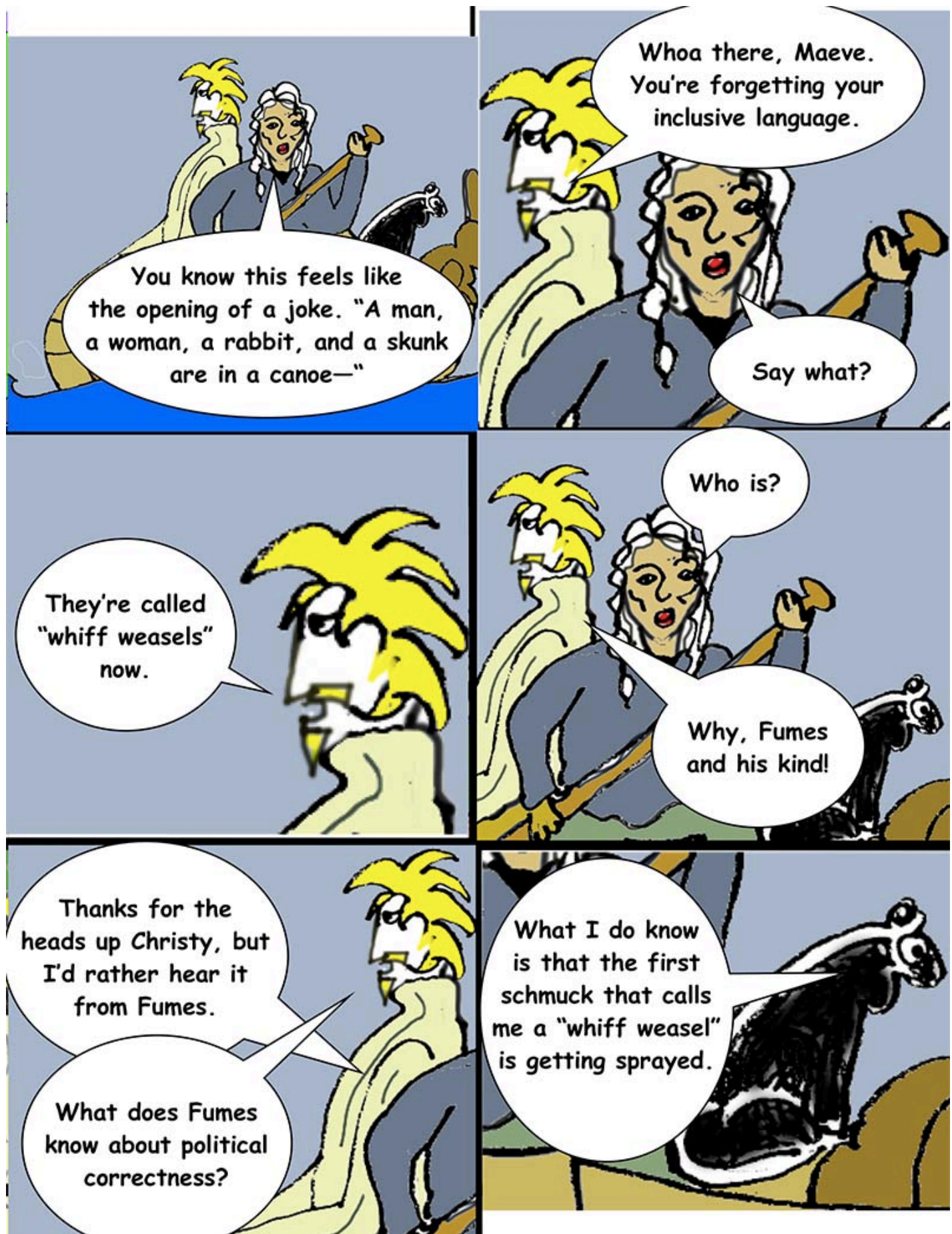
Thank you for writing Danielle and I believe you will do the right thing.

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



Poet Maeve  
Political Correction

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](mailto:services@ausu.org) with any questions about this article.

## IMPORTANT DATES

- Dec 15: [Jan degree requirements deadline](#)
- Dec 16: [AUSU Public Council Meeting](#)
- Dec 20 – Jan 2: [AUSU Holiday Closure](#)
- Dec 31: [Deadline to apply for course extension for Feb](#)
- Jan 10: [Deadline to register in a course starting Feb 1](#)
- Jan 15: [Deadline for exams for courses ending Dec 2019](#)

## Now Hiring Chief Returning Officer

AUSU is currently accepting applications for the Chief Returning Officer (CRO) for our [2020 General Election](#).

The CRO, working with AUSU staff, is responsible for monitoring all aspects of the election process **from Jan 24 to March, 2020**, including but not limited to:

- accepting nominations and verifying the eligibility of nominees;
- informing candidates of campaign policy;
- enforcing campaign policy;
- accepting votes;
- confirming voter eligibility;
- confirming ballot counts from electronic voting system;
- reporting election results to council; and
- conducting any election appeals, unless the CRO is the subject of the appeal.

The anticipated time commitment is approx. 35 – 50 hours from January to March, 2020. **The CRO position can be performed from any location**, but requires telephone, email, and internet capability. The CRO must be available to respond to inquiries within 1 business day. Proficiency in Word and Excel is required.

The successful candidate will receive a \$1500 honorarium on successful completion of the role. Previous experience is a definite asset, however not required.

For more details on the job description and process to apply, visit our website [here](#).



## Mental Health Support

The holidays can be a stressful time of year. Whether you are struggling with budgeting, anxiety, or loneliness during the holiday season, there is help available.

For immediate support, 24/7, call Homewood Health  
**1-800-663-1142.**

You can also visit [homeweb.ca](http://homeweb.ca) to use online resources.



## AUSU Bylaw Revisions

AUSU council will be voting on revised bylaws during the January council meeting to make it more accessible for Athabasca University students to run in the AUSU election.

### 1<sup>st</sup> Reading of the Bylaws:

The first reading of the bylaw revisions is coming up on **December 10, 2019 at 5:30pm MT**. All members are welcome to attend by teleconference. The agenda and instructions for joining are posted online [here](#).

Visit our website [here](#) for more information on the bylaw revisions and other member consultations.



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# CLASSIFIEDS

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Classifieds are free for AU students!  
Contact [voice@voicemagazine.org](mailto:voice@voicemagazine.org) for more information.

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## THE VOICE

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