



THE VOICE

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BEST OF THE VOICE 2019



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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

What's the Best of About?

Karl Low



At the beginning of each year *The Voice Magazine* does our “Best of” issue, but what does that really mean? A lot of people confuse it with a top ten type of issue, especially these days where list based articles are so prevalent (because they can keep drawing you through page after page of new advertising views). But a “Best of The Voice” issue isn’t just going through and picking out the best written or most impressive articles from the year—as if that would even be possible.

No, with the diversity of students and articles that the Voice runs, choosing the absolute “Best” is simply going to be a reflection of the individual who’s choosing, and not really reflective of the students. For instance, there’s some articles in the Voice that, honestly, aren’t really my cup of tea, but I’ve gotten comments from students that they’re appreciated. And because the Voice should be more about the students than just one guy who’s doing the editing, I happily keep publishing them. A couple of them are even in here.

So then what is a Best of issue? I like to think of it as, if you were going to pick up a single issue of the Voice each year, what articles would best represent what we do here. What issue can you just give to someone and say, “Here. Here’s what The Voice Magazine is about.”

That means the issue always ends up a fairly large one, though, because there’s so much that needs to be shown, from student reactions to current events, reflections on what it means to be an AU student, informative articles about courses, awards, study habits, general life advice, academic or scholastic advice, particular topics of interest, and more.

But most important in collating this issue is following the suggestions and advice of you, the readers of the Voice Magazine. I was quite pleased this year with the number of people who submitted at least one or two picks. That always makes the selection process a lot easier, so a big thank you to all of you who helped create this issue. Hopefully you see it as as much your issue of The Voice Magazine as it is mine or anybody else’s.

Not everything in this issue is a repeat, however, because life doesn’t stop around the holidays, no matter how badly you lose track of the days, there’s still things that students need to know, like the latest AU Events, or another scholarship opportunity you may not have been aware of. We’ve kept up with that.

Finally, I’d like to take this opportunity to thank all of the writers for their work over the past year, and all of the readers for gifting us with your most valuable commodity, time. That you’d spend it with us is absolutely appreciated, and I hope we’re giving you value in return.

With that, I hope all of you have had a happy new year so far, and that this issue is simply another point in that continuing for the rest of it! Enjoy the read! I certainly did!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Karl", written in a cursive, flowing style.

MINDS WE MEET



Madison Daviduik is a twenty-one-year-old from Swan River, Manitoba. She lives with her family on a family farm and works full-time as a Supervisor for their local Aquatic Centre. She is currently enrolled into the Bachelor of Commerce – Finance program and is a self-proclaimed nerd. 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?

I'm 21 years old and I live and was born in Swan River, Manitoba, a small town about five hours northwest of Winnipeg. I reside on a family farm with my parents and grandparents; we primarily operate with cattle and grain. I've also worked full time at the local Aquatic Centre as a Supervisor for the past five years. I'm a self-proclaimed nerd, and love all things classic rock, Tim Burton, and Nintendo.

What was it like growing up on a farm? What does your day-to-day look like when you're involved with farm life?

If I could describe it in one word: busy. There are always things to do and no day is ever the same! It could include anything from moving cows, to cleaning out trucks and tractors, filling

the air seeder, running for parts or running a combine. It really depends on what time of year it is, and sometimes it makes getting schoolwork done a challenge, but I wouldn't trade it away!

Could you describe the path that led you to AU?

I originally wanted to take a gap year out of high school, before moving onto the University of Manitoba to complete a Bachelor of Pharmacy. My school counsellors convinced me to take courses online that year, which led me to want to take my year one pre-requisites online as well. U of M doesn't offer science courses online which ended up with me taking Chemistry and Biology from Athabasca. After not being accepted into the pharmacy program (and the set of pre-requisites changing as the program was being re-designed), I needed to look at other options. I didn't want to complete another set of pre-req's and end up not getting in for another few years. After checking the programs offered at AU, I chose the Bachelor of Commerce (Finance) program. I love the program and I'm so happy I made the switch.

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

Between working and studying full time, and living on a farm, it doesn't leave much downtime! If I do have some, I like to read or play games on my Switch.

What type of games do you enjoy playing on your Switch?

So far nothing has topped *Zelda: Breath of the Wild*! It was such a well-made game, I've also played through *Super Mario Odyssey*, *Let's Go Pikachu* and *Fire Emblem Warriors*. *Super Mario Party* and

Mario Kart have been staples as well! I can't wait for *Fire Emblem: Three Houses* and *Pokémon Sword/Shield* to come out this year.

What are your plans for this education once you finish? How does it fit in with where you want to go?

I do not plan on moving out of my town, all of my family is here, and I have no reason/desire to move. I would love to work at a bank/FCC where I could do agricultural loans! I love farm life and would like to keep some aspect of it in my career.

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

My parents always pushed me to do my best and wanted the best for me as well. I definitely learned my perseverance and determination from them.

Describe your experience with online learning so far. What do you like? Dislike?

I love being able to teach myself and learn at my own pace! I was always that kid in school who was done before everyone else and had to find something to do to waste time. This way I can just power through and get stuff done! The only dislike is sometimes it is hard to contact the right people when you have questions.

At what point did you waver the most about continuing your schooling?

I definitely wavered when I was not accepted into my original program. Though I'm glad I decided to change programs!

What's your most memorable AU course so far, and why?

Biology 207 was definitely the most memorable course I have taken at AU. Being able to travel to Athabasca to do the five-day lab was such a cool experience!

Could you briefly describe BIOL 207 to students who have not yet taken it? Would you recommend the course? Was it a difficult course?

It is the second part of introductory biology and is likely going to be needed in most science programs. It builds a lot on basics from high school biology and really delved into the diversity of organisms, from big to small. I wouldn't say it's incredibly easy, but I found it easier to manage than BIOL 204, so if you can get through that, you can get through this.

Any advice for students who are about to enroll into BIOL 207?

Brush up on some diversity basics from high school biology. Prepare yourself to spend a lot of time reading. Be excited to travel to Athabasca to do the labs! Also, don't forget there are bursaries for students who go to do labs as well.

Was this your first time at AU? Could you describe the experience to students who have not had the chance to go there? Did it remind you of a "normal" university?

It was my first time visiting! Athabasca as a town itself is so quaint and peaceful. The university is nestled up in the trees on a hill and the drive through town is spectacular! Not what I expected at all. The campus actually reminds me more of my high school than any of the other universities I've visited, just due to its size and how it is laid out! Very easy to get around, but considering it is an online university. There are not many students walking around and no lecture halls, etc., so it does not seem like a typical or 'normal' university.

What was the lab like? Did it feel well organized and what experiment did you do?

I felt that it was very well organized. The instructors were very helpful and knowledgeable, and they made it fun. We had a small group, so everyone got to know each other well. We did a few small experiments to do with cell division, different fungi and spectrometry. We also dissected a pig which everyone seemed to either love or hate!

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

The only thing I think I've missed out on is the opportunity to make new friends and experience that diversity. But I definitely think it was worth it because I'm not a social person to begin with.

How do you find communications with your course tutors?

Using the student support centre isn't my favourite mode of communication. I would prefer just to be able to email my tutor directly and quickly than go through a whole process.

What's your pet peeve if you have one?

My biggest pet peeve is when people leave coffee stains on the white counters at work, or when people move my files around.

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

Tim Burton. I'd love to pick his brain about where he gets all his amazing inspiration from.

Describe the proudest moment in your life.

When I bought my Jeep, brand new, all on my own!

Could you describe one thing that distinguishes you from most other people?

I feel like there's a lot. I'm into dark humour, creepy Claymation movies, Pokémon and classic rock. Super obsessed with makeup. I also don't have a problem with helping pull a calf during calving season. Not many 21-year-old girls have the same attributes! I know I'm weird and I live by it. Not many people I know or work with would be able to guess what I'm into either! I could probably make a very long list to answer this question.

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

Not to let other people use me or walk over me. Through certain experiences I've learned my self-worth and how to speak up.

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

I've done a few road trips through the US, and one out to Athabasca through labs. All of those experiences have been amazing! It's great just to spend time with my family and make memories.

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

I'm currently in the middle of two books. *The Book of Life* by Deborah Harkness, and *Jade City* by Fonda Lee.

Could you describe the books you're reading? Would you recommend them to students?

I'm only a couple chapters into *Jade City* so I can't say much on that one! *The Book of Life* is the third book in its series. It tells the stories of vampires, witches and demons but in a very sophisticated way. It includes a lot of European history as well. I would recommend it to anyone who enjoyed the *Vampire Diaries*, *Vampire Academy*, or similar books as a teenager and would like to revisit the genre as an adult.

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

[Always a popular series, this particular Minds We Meet from our May 17th issue was remembered by a Voice Reader who noted she particularly liked the pride of the farm talked about here. Me? I liked the juxtaposition of the self-proclaimed nerd and farmer.]



Ray

Barb Godin



Ray was my brother-in-law for over fifty years. He passed away on my birthday this year. When I heard he was in the hospital and things were not looking good I kept thinking, “not on my birthday, I don't want to have to live with this memory.”

Ray was a special person. I know everyone says that about someone after they pass away, but Ray truly was a special person. I cannot remember a time when Ray was not a part of my life. Ray and my sister genuinely had a remarkable love. One which produced four children and numerous grandchildren. I didn't pay much attention to Ray while I was growing up; he was just the guy that everyone liked. He had a big presence and a bigger voice, and his hugs made you feel all warm and cozy. Ray made everyone he met feel they mattered to him and every person who met Ray remembered him, even if they only met him once. He always wore his signature red shirt and was often seen with a Tim Horton coffee in hand.

When I began writing he often critiqued my stories and more often than not played the devil's advocate with my Dear Barb column. If Ray suggested an alternate answer it frequently gave me pause to reconsider. A couple of times Ray even sent questions in to The Voice signed "BIG RED." I had to laugh because I knew who it was. Ray and I had verbal sparring matches, but they never became serious or hostile. We shared a mutual respect. Ray wasn't the type of person you could get angry at, as his heart was in the right place. His love for his family was enormous and it was mutual.

As he began to physically decline, no one wanted to see it. He had been losing weight and had been having dizzy spells. He was hospitalized on a couple of occasions and diagnosed with having mini strokes. He seemed to come through them with no ill effects and quickly returned to being "Uncle Ray", as he was affectionately known. My heart broke when my sister called me the night before my birthday to tell me Ray had collapsed and was in the hospital, diagnosed with a brain bleed. He peacefully fell into a deep sleep and passed away the following day with family and friends gathered around.

Ray's funeral was huge, with hundreds of people attending and sharing all their special memories with my sister. In the six months since he passed, I think about him most days. I know he would have been proud that I won first place from the Professional Writer's Association of Canada for a story, congratulating me with one of his bear hugs. Ray was my brother-in-law, but he always felt more like a brother to me. I will always miss our special times filled with laughter and love. Ray possessed a unique gift that anyone would be grateful to have, and he will be remembered by all who knew him. But my birthday now will always be a bittersweet day, as my heart will be heavy with memories of the loss of my dear brother.

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

[Our own Barb Godin could take up a career as an obituary writer. Sadly, she has the experience. Fortunately for us, she uses this to bring us words and stories in The Voice Magazine that often generate a lot of compliments, kudos, and even awards. This one, from the October 25 issue, caught the attention of a couple of Voice readers who wrote in to suggest it. I can't argue.]



Porkpie Hat Night Picnic

Darjeeling Jones



In the English seaside town I grew up in, there was an urban legend about a certain apple tree that grew on the edge of the town park, or the Recreation Grounds, as the place was known. The story went that a woman, a single mother with three young daughters, had brought her family to the park for a “midnight picnic”, and whilst there had strangled the children and thrown their bodies into the sea. She had then hanged herself from a branch of the tree, where she was discovered the next morning by a class of primary school children on a field trip.

The Recreation Grounds, as I recall them, were the perfect setting for this grisly story. It was situated behind a bus depot, near a low cliff overlooking the North Sea. In my memory, the playing fields were nothing more than a wasteland of mud and broken glass; the seascape beyond consisted of treacherous cliffs, black, jagged rocks, tidal pools teeming with spiny and squishy lifeforms, and perpetually angry, roiling, slate-grey ocean waves. It was the sort of coastline where one could easily

imagine bodies washing ashore; the sort of sea more likely to breed monsters than mermaids.

The park’s playground consisted of a roundabout with rotten, splintered boards, a rusted, medieval-looking climbing structure, and a pair of swings with chains that gave forth an unearthly shrieking sound on the rare occasions that they were ever used.

And, of course, there was the apple tree—ancient, gnarled, producing mean and diseased-looking fruit. It was an article of faith amongst us kids that one bite of one of those apples could bring about all manner of misfortune, including (but not limited to) downturns in luck, parental divorce, broken limbs, bedroom hauntings, and even sudden death. Rumour had it, amongst us gossipy little twits, that a girl named Shirley Blake, a sixth former, had taken a bite of one on a dare. I remember it was source of unending speculation as to when—rather than if—some terrible fate would befall her. As far as I remember, the worst thing that ever did happen to her was that she got her forehead slashed during a field hockey game and had to get some stitches. Naturally, we took this as definitive confirmation.

According to the legend, if you went to the tree on the night of a full moon, you would be greeted by the sight of the dead mother swinging slowly from the creaking branch, whilst her children sat on a picnic blanket at the foot of it, silently eating a repast of earwigs, beetles, moths, and worms.

I remember very little of the things I learned in the dreary classrooms of that primary school: a few juicily bloody stories from history and the bible spring to mind. I remember some fumbling studies of human anatomy in the bushes behind the portables. Most clearly, though, I recall that weird piece of dark folklore and the images it etched into my imagination: the hanged woman, slowly turning in the breeze, and children sitting on the blanket, eating their midnight picnic, with the legs and wings of crawling and flying creatures hanging from their lips.

In a way, I have been drawn to permutations of that unsettling story throughout my life. I have looked for them, and found them, in the Nordic Noir, dark country songs, horror novels, and operas. I have seen and heard echoes of the ghost woman in the apple tree in the songs of Neko

Case, Neil Young, The Handsome Family. I can find traces of the story in Black Swan, Macbeth, Blue Velvet, and The Shining. It seemed to me then, as it seems to me now, that there is some profound, symbolic truth contained in such stories of madness, strangeness, and misfortune. Perhaps there are some things that are essential for us to know about certain aspects of the mysterious universe that are best understood through story.

[Personally, I love the evocative language in all of the Porkpie Hat articles, so I was very happy when a Voice Reader suggested this one, from our February 22 issue, for inclusion in the Best Of.]



Brittany Daigle

Course Exam

AU courses, up close

Course Exam

Brittany Daigle

PSYC 228 (Introduction to Human Development) is a three-credit introductory psychology course that has students studying the basic concepts and mechanisms inherent in the process of human development from birth to old age, with an emphasis on the physical, cognitive, and socioemotional changes associated with each life stage. PSYC 228 has two precluded courses, which includes PSYC 257 and PSYC 323. This means that PSYC 228 may not be taken for credit by students if credit has already been obtained for PSYC 257 or PSYC 323. There are no prerequisites for this course and there is a Challenge for Credit option if you are interested.

Introduction to Human Development is made up of eight units, and requires eight quizzes worth five percent each, a critical review assignment weighing fifteen percent (three percent for the approval and twelve percent for the assignment), a research participation assignment for another five percent, and the final examination worth the remaining forty percent. The eight units discussed in this course cover the process of human development, which includes infancy, early childhood, middle and late childhood, adolescence, emerging and young adulthood, middle adulthood, and late adulthood. To receive credit for PSYC 228, students must successfully complete all quizzes and the assignment and must achieve a composite course grade of at least a "D," which is equivalent to fifty percent and a grade of at least fifty percent on the final examination.

Dr. Bob Heller joined Athabasca University as a tutor in 1989 and joined the faculty in 2001. He has been the coordinator for PSYC 228 since 2001 and he explains that "during that time, PSYC 228 has evolved from a child development course to a lifespan course covering cradle to grave change." Alongside PSYC 228, Dr. Heller also coordinates PSYC 381 (Psychology of Adult Development), PSYC 375 (History of Psychology), and he coordinates and tutors PSYC 355 (Cognitive Psychology).

I gave Dr. Heller the opportunity to introduce himself to students and he stated "I obtained my Ph.D. in Experimental Psychology in 1992 at the University of Alberta and held a Post-Doctorate Research Fellowship, from 1992-94, in the Centre of Excellence on Aging Research Network where I conducted research on driving, dementia, and aging. I joined the Centre for Psychology

at Athabasca University in 2001 as an associate professor and became interested in conversational agents and their role in distance education. This research has evolved into an investigation of animated historical figures as pedagogical agents and their place in immersive worlds. See <http://psychology.athabascau.ca/faculty/bheller/>."

When asked to describe PSYC 228 to students, he explains that "Psychology 228 covers development from birth to death and the preparations before and after. Given the scope of coverage, it is easier to divide the lifespan into seven stages or epochs: Infancy, early childhood, late childhood, adolescence, emerging adult, middle adulthood, and old age. In this course we spend a couple of chapters on each epoch covering the physical and mental change that occur along the way. There are a number of theoretical approaches to explain and understand the changes that we also cover."

As for the structure of the course, he states that "There are eight units in the course, one for each epoch plus an introductory unit to describe some theories and methodology. There is one online quiz for each unit consisting of a combination of multiple-choice questions and some long answer question and each quiz counts 5% towards the final grade. There is also a paper worth 15% where students investigate a topic of their choosing by identifying and summarizing an instructor-approved review article. A review article is a special type of scholarly article that summarizes other research on a focused topic. There is also a research participation component worth 5% that offers students an opportunity to participate in an online research study conducting by faculty at the psychology department. Finally, the final exam is worth 40% and structured much like the quizzes with a combination of multiple-choice questions and long answer questions."

He explains that "Based on the feedback provided so far, PSYC 228 is seen as average or fair in terms of the workload." Furthermore, despite there being very little participation for PSYC 228 on the AUSU Course Evaluation website, the reviews from the students are very positive.

When asked if he had any advice for students who are considering enrolling, he states "Make the course work for you. Have some aging parents? Are you a first-time parent? Are you emerging into adulthood? Use the issues that face you today to guide your choices when it comes to the review paper."

As for who he recommends this course to, he explains "Quite honestly, I do not think there is a single student that would not benefit from a course like PSYC 228. It is like an owner's manual for life."

When asked what he believes students will take away from this course, Dr. Bob Heller believes that it is "The paper. Most students remember the papers they write in the courses they take. I hope that students take the advice mentioned above and use the assignment to investigate something of personal interest."

Though the paper is also what he believes students struggle with the most, stating "Sometimes structure is very helpful, especially in new situations. Having too much freedom can be daunting."

Whether PSYC 228 is a degree or program requirement of yours, or the topics discussed above are of interest to you, this course will have you learning a lot of interesting material surrounding the topic of human development.

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

[The Course Exams are our most read articles. This one, from the June 21 issue, had the highest number of views of all the ones published in 2019. Useful information for students? That's the Voice.]



The Struggling Student Rants

Credit Junkie Seeks Prepaid Credit Card

Angela Pappas



Credit cards are not the source of all evil. Yes, you read that correctly. They are not our friends, but neither are they our foes. They are objects, and objects don't have intentions. This would be like saying a carrot stick or a textbook intends to murder us in the middle of the night. Although many AU students would disagree about the murder-by-textbook, we still have to remember these objects don't start their day with the intent of sabotaging our happiness. They don't start their day at all, we do. Neither do they have intentions; we have the responsibility for those also. Furthermore, our intentions manifest through our habits—our spending habits for the purposes of *The Struggling Student Rants*. Therefore, just like the textbook or the carrot stick, the credit card just sits there lifeless and ready to do our bidding. Our bidding is the

key—we can use it for good or evil—it's all about leverage. This may sound cliché, but think about it. We can use our textbooks to ace our exams or we can use a particularly heavy one to knock someone out cold if they piss us off. With that same intent, we can use the credit card to our advantage and as a tool to help us along our journey. The other option is to use the card to go on a wild and crazy shopping spree, with no regard for blowing the budget. When I can't control my spending and end up with an exorbitant bill, I like to think I can always just fake my own death, buy a plane ticket to Havana and spend my remaining days on the beach, listening to samba and smoking cigars; but then I snap back to reality. My demise is my own doing and I have to face the music I composed.

There was a time when we didn't have to control our spending; not the way we do now. Credit cards weren't an option—they didn't even exist. Cash was King; you either had it or you didn't. Anything you needed, you paid for with cash. Some folks still prefer it this way, but it's getting harder to choose your vehicle of choice. All this has changed, however, in the past couple of decades. From buying your daily latte at Starbucks; paying for groceries and utility bills; to buying big-ticket items, like home appliances and furniture. The shift towards a cashless existence started by cutting cheques; something millennials may never get to experience in their lifetime. Even cheques are now becoming obsolete—archaic almost—to make the consumer experience as seamless as possible. Credit cards are now the vehicle of choice, and they don't even need to be anywhere near the consumer to use them. The bearer can upload everything to their smartphone app, or they can even pay with a swipe of a wrist, if they've been suckered into paying a grand or two for a smartwatch.

Therefore, if money, in one form or another, is available 24/7, how is it our fault if we can't keep our finances in check? Again, money itself is the object, not the wrongdoer. It's the vehicle we use to get where we're going. Vehicles have neither good nor evil intentions. Similar to using a weapon to hurt someone, or eating two large pizzas rather than two slices, the doer is to blame, not the item. Therefore, any responsibility in overspending is on us, not the credit card. There are thousands of studies that look at the actual source of this behaviour in depth; it's not just a matter of will power or lack, thereof. However, I believe the true power lies in recognizing there's

an issue, to begin with, rather than continuing to live and spend in denial. You can't correct something if you don't know it's wrong. Compulsive spending is known as an impulse control disorder in the psychology world and has similar features to other addictive illnesses, such as eating disorders and substance abuse ([Black, Shaw, McCormick, Bayless & Allen, 2012](#)).

Our AU psychology majors should be nodding their heads right about now. In a Psychology Today article, the author explains, "compulsive buying is characterized by excessive preoccupation or poor impulse control with shopping," and can result in some very ugly consequences, like serious marital conflict relating to financial problems ([Heshmat, 2018](#)). It does make sense, however, if you and your significant other are paddling in different directions—you to the bank and they to the mall. At some point, you're both going to get tired of the resistance and either let the other take control or give them a nice goose egg with the oar and throw them overboard. Similarly, it's not just the shopping sprees we should beware of. There are myriads of financial disorders associated with spending, wealth accumulation, and even the tendency to sabotage our financial wellbeing. These tendencies may not be as simple as shrugging it off and blaming it on our love of a good Black Friday sale.

[Brad Klontz](#), an associate professor in Financial Psychology at Creighton University (among many other impressive feats), specializes in researching and defining money disorders. He and his colleagues published their research in 2012, in *The Journal of Financial Therapy*. The authors explain there are many financial-related disorders, in addition to overspending and compulsive buying. Underspending, compulsive hoarding, and workaholism are also issues to keep in mind ([Klontz, Britt, Archuleta & Klontz, 2012](#)). To make it even more confusing, as psychology tends to be, these tendencies don't just all fit into one neat pile. However, to save you some reading time from your busy schedule, Klontz et al. summarize that, "in general, a money disorder is a chronic pattern of self-defeating or self-destructive financial behaviors." Although the research is a few years behind, it's eye opening and still relevant. Everyone should glimpse through it before the Black Friday sales this weekend or the upcoming Christmas Season, to make sure there are no lurking, self-sabotaging factors at play. How would we recognize these within? Well, walking out of a bargain centre with Christmas gifts for everyone—including the best friend's cousin's next-door neighbour—would be a good sign of a bigger problem that needs looking into.

However, a shopping-spree addiction, as the root cause of mental anguish or family strife, doesn't strike people as troubling—most just laugh about it. When brought up, people will join the conversation and relay their own hoarding tendencies or flaunt their deal-sniffing abilities. People will intervene to help a loved one if they're drinking themselves into a stupor 24/7—we all now know through the myriad research studies that it's much deeper than the alcohol itself. However, folks may not recognize the alarm bells going off with a spouse's fifteenth trip to *Winners & Home Sense* this month. They'll just accept that, "the kids needed their 200th pair of socks," and carry on with their day, without wondering whether that one more pair of socks is an attempt to patch up all the holes in our significant other's heart. We won't talk about finances to strangers but, often, we won't talk about finances with our friends and family, either. In a world where other, much more serious and controversial topics have been brought to the forefront to get people to speak up and, hopefully, alleviate some internal suffering, money is still kept hush-hush and not talked about at the dinner table or the office water cooler.

People see finances as an awkward and controversial topic. Those that have more than enough of it feel ashamed, as if they did someone injustice; and those that don't have enough of it also feel ashamed, as if their self-worth is attached to their wallet. Both sides, therefore, remain quiet in hopes that the other side won't notice. The question, then, is that if neither side talks about it, how is anyone going to help? It's common knowledge that disagreeing with how finances are handled can make or break family life. I have seen close friends divorcing and losing everything,

including their family's support, due to their gambling habits; there was no support available to see this and treat it for the addiction it is. I have also witnessed siblings take part in battles that make the Wars of the Roses seem like child's play, which is depressing altogether. People's clear lack of ethos over the dollar shouldn't come as a surprise; however, the fact that money is thicker than both blood and water is disheartening. This holiday season, make it a priority to promote your love of family and friends, not their presents. If you're feeling particularly ballsy, try to spread the financial know-how and talk about the issues. We all know they're there; we're just not used to talking about them in the open. Being open about these matters, however, is the only way to overcome them, and spread the cheer.

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[I wanted to include a Struggling Student Rants, because almost every AU student knows the difficulties of struggling with finances while trying to pay for courses, but was leaning toward the one from February 15 that spoke about the lack of general financial literacy when Angela responded to my question about which of her articles she thought was best. With more direct practical advice, but also addressing the stigma many of us have about discussing finances, she was right.]



Scholarship of the Week

Digging up scholarship treasure for AU students.

Scholarship name: SME Education Foundation awards scholarships

Sponsored by: SME Education Foundation and sponsors

Deadline: February 1, 2020

Potential payout: varies by scholarship

Eligibility restriction: Applicants must be residents of Canada or the U.S., current high school, undergrad, or grad students, attending an accredited Canadian or U.S. university or college in Fall 2020, have a GPA of at least 2.0, and pursuing a degree in one of the qualifying majors. (see full eligibility criteria and descriptions of individual scholarships.)

What's required: An online application, details of which will be revealed after you register.

Tips: One application puts you in line for a number of scholarships related to the manufacturing engineering technology field.

Where to get info: www.smeef.org/sme-education-foundation-scholarships/scholarship-opportunities/undergraduate-students/



Fly on the Wall

Entitlement Through the Ages

Jason Sullivan



We're All the Me Generation

'Entitlement: Old as the Hills' etc

Nobody wants to be called *entitled*, even if it's true. As university students we're at risk of becoming branded with this pejorative term regardless of our age; protesting our innocence may seem of no avail. After all, only an entitled person would complain that the label was unfair! And hey, life's unfair, right? Like the torture method of *looping* described by the Mannville, AB sociologist Erving Goffman, where compliance itself is taken as a sign of resistance and punished accordingly by the aggressor. There may

be no way out of how others choose to ghettoize us (Kim Ser, online).

Looping works as follows: "A 'permissive' atmosphere is felt to encourage the inmate to 'project; or 'act out'...Through the process of looping, the inmate's reaction to his own situation is collapsed back into this situation itself, and he is not allowed to retain the usual segregation of the these phases of action" (Goffman, 37). In other words, if we admit to our privilege and show appreciation for it, we are saddled with a negative stigma. Guilty as charged! Like a kangaroo court, any admission of privilege or comment of gratitude may be taken as a sign of entitlement and looped back onto us so that we feel guilty for what we have and, ontologically speaking, for the essence of who we are. There's no escape, it seems. No egress, that is, until we examine the history of the matter of entitlement more deeply.

We could just accept our status as denizens of a supposedly spoiled category of university students. Or, we could provide ourselves some perspective; we at AU are far from a homogenous Millennial group, we're a mix of all ages and backgrounds. Because our student body runs the gamut, what entitlement we may possess transcends time and place. Our education is rootless and protean; it transcends cultural boundaries and terminologies compared to the rooted nature of brick and mortar schooling. And anyway, what is entitlement really?

Let's consider the context of the epithet *entitled*. Know thy enemy, as they say.

Urban Dictionary states that an entitled person is: "someone who thinks something is owed to them by life in general; or because they are who they are" (UrbanDictionary, online). Goffman notes that "It is strange that today, when an individual can get almost everything else off his back, there remains the cross of personal character, the one he bears, albeit lightly, when he is in the presence of others" (Goffman, P. 37). It stings to be called entitled, but that doesn't mean it's true.

To succeed at AU, we diligently adopt our own schedule amid hectic lives; we must work hard and consistently to prioritize our studies. To be a distance student is to perpetually ask oneself "have I done my homework?" Sounds pretty responsible to me. However, others might hear that we're students in, say, the social sciences, and assume that we just sit around reading blogs and complaining about current events. After all, high school social studies is, and was, about an easy an A as you can get. And anyway, "what are you gonna do with that degree?" If we have a job already why not work harder and seek a promotion, or, if we're looking for a career shift, why not just take some re-training or polish up that magic wand of success manifestation: the resume. To some observers, the privilege of restarting our post-secondary education may smack of the

same privilege received by 18-year-olds as they ship out to a big glorious campus in a land far, far, away.

Normally, let's be honest, the label *entitled* is affixed to folks who post birthdays in the last quarter century. Millennials. From this seeming fact one might conclude that previous generations were more respectful of their elders and circumspect about the voicing of any criticisms lest they bite the hand that feeds. As the phrase goes, let's unpack this belief a bit.

Summer of Love, Summer of Entitlement?

Imagine my surprise when, watching a classic Hollywood movie from 1967: *Guess Who's Coming to Dinner*, I was faced at the climax was this monologue spoken by a son to his father:

"You listen to me. You say you don't want to tell me how to live my life. So what do you think you've been doing? You tell me what rights I've got or haven't got, and what I owe to you for what you've done for me. Let me tell you something. I owe you nothing! If you carried that bag a million miles, you did what you're supposed to do! Because you brought me into this world. And from that day you owed me everything you could ever do for me like I will owe my son if I ever have another. But you don't own me! You can't tell me when or where I'm out of line or try to get me to live my life according to your rules. You don't even know what I am, Dad, you don't know who I am. You don't know how I feel, what I think. And if I tried to explain it the rest of your life you will never understand. You are 30 years older than I am. You and your whole lousy generation believes the way it was for you is the way it's got to be. And not until your whole generation has lain down and died will the dead weight of you be off our backs! You understand, you've got to get off my back!" (Rose, online).

Not Until Your Whole Generation Has Lain Down and Died

This angry son wasn't some raging millennial but Sidney Poitier's character reaming out his own father. In the movie, a liberal-minded white couple see the crows of their tolerance come home to roost when their daughter brings home a white-collar black man as her fiancé. Shortly, amidst quirky calamities ranging from botched ice cream tastings to arguments over fender benders, Poitier's character comes face to face with his own father. His Dad, a lifelong postal clerk who had saved and scrimped to the point that Poitier's mother even did without a good winter coat, is made to endure this assault. Supposedly there was no chance Father would understand Son, nor did his son feel gratitude or loyalty after having his education and career opportunities paid for.

The fact that Hollywood of the era found this a normal and expected response by a young man speaks volumes of the cultural climate of the 60s; youth weren't denigrated as snowflakes, they were encouraged to tell off their elders. Something was in the air, all right. At this climactic moment Poitier, the viewer can only assume, speaks for broad segments of Hollywood and an entire generation of baby boomers and incipient world leaders. Out with the old and with a shovel! Is this not the ultimate expression of entitlement, arrogance, and selfishness? Has a movie of the 21st century approached the vitriol Poitier's character hurls at his parents? (Please write the *Fly on the Wall* c/o *Voice Magazine* if you've seen such a film!)

And that's not all, at the same time as this movie was storming cinemas during the supposed decade of love and peace and flowers, the Who were singing gleeful lines like "I hope I die before I get old," and "Why don't you all just fade away" (Green Day, online). Their classic song "My Generation" is just one minnow in a streaming cultural inundation. In my case, Green Day's cover was the first version of "My Generation" I heard, on their 1991 album *Kerplunk*. Thus, rebellion seems embedded in the nature of youth. And meanwhile, during the demographic intermundia when Generation X were in their teens, the classic punk band the Dead Kennedys sang:

"I would rather stay a child/And keep my self-respect/If being an adult/Means being like you" (Dead Kennedys, online).

Earning our Stripes as Rugged Individualists

Disagreeing with one's teachers, parents, and elders clearly transcends generations. Everyone was entitled at some point to some extent. What doesn't break this time-space barrier, however, is the value of education which we at AU are privileged to receive. It's not easy studying in a corner, a closet, a laundry room, or perhaps even a woodshed while peers and family suspect we are just avoiding them. Even the most understanding of loved ones note our relative absence during our departure into the murky netherworld of online higher learning.

And as for ourselves, at the risk of making this all about us and failing the first "am I entitled" meme-ocracy test, AU studies are hard. Whiney-hard, take a stress leave hard, hard like writing a novel while under lock and key in solitary confinement. *The Shining* has nothing on AU deadlines, but it's all worth it! Unlike showing up at work and screwing the pooch all day, or working at the craft of looking industrious, it's possible to fail a test or botch an essay and have no one to blame but ourselves! And that's the existential joy of it. At AU the buck stops with us.

But wait, there's more: skipping is tantalizingly easy with no classroom to show up at; *Ferris Bueller's Day Off* would be the story of our lives if we didn't intermittently play taskmaster and crack the whip upon on our own backs. Having said that, little is more gratifying than to complete a course and realize that it was us alone who were the predominant alpha and omega of our academic motivation and success. Us alone, and whomever raised us to be intelligent students and aided our education along the way, and to whom we feel gratitude. After all, somebody clothed us and made sure we went to school in our younger years, right? We were trained for this mission!

If we were really entitled, we'd ignore our own history and its benefits we've reaped. Little wisdom can surpass the sense of reaching a higher plane of intellectual existence such that any look over our shoulder is a soul-shuddering vertiginous gaze down, down, down, like Jack from his beanstalk. Jack disobeyed his elders, distrusted their wisdom, and look at the trouble he got into! So let's stay grounded at AU; we've earned our success and our perspective, but our lives and loved ones are the ones who nurtured us so we could thrive!

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

[I asked the writers to choose what they thought was their best article. Sometimes I disagreed. This one, however, from the February 15th issue, I wholeheartedly agreed on. The Fly on the Wall can be a dense read, but it's often worth it for AU students looking for inspiration or introspection. If part of a university education is learning exactly who we, as people, are, I find the Fly on the Wall often points us to the signposts we otherwise would have missed.]

Paying for the Parchment Scholarships to the rescue!

Barb Lehtiniemi



Each time I glance at my AU parchment, hanging near my desk, I think back to the effort that went into earning my degree. And, inevitably, I think back to the money that went into it, too.

When I began pursuing my degree, I assumed that I'd qualify for the same financial assistance that younger students do. But as many other mature students have experienced, our demographic is excluded from sources of financial-need based funding designed with a much-younger student in mind.

Scholarships saved my education.

I applied for any scholarship I qualified for. Some were long shots and others I felt confident about. Not knowing, in most cases, how many other students would be vying for the same scholarship, I reminded myself that some organizations get very few applications. Each chance was worth the effort.

There are many sources of scholarships. Here are a few that helped me on the road to my degree:

Athabasca University

AU lists over 80 awards available to undergrad students. Some are program-specific, while others are general. The deadlines are spread out over the year, and awards with upcoming deadlines are highlighted. I checked the list each month to see which awards had deadlines in the coming month or so, then applied for any I was qualified for. I don't know how many applications AU gets for any of their awards, but I won most of the scholarships I applied for, and even one I didn't. Registrar.athabascau.ca/studentawards/undergraduate.php is where to go to see the full list of AU awards.

AUSU

The student union offers a smaller suite of scholarships, but they award them twice per year. For most scholarships, AUSU often received only a few dozen applications each, and sometimes fewer than ten. Despite the low application numbers, I found these awards tougher to earn, even after earning similar awards from AU (for community service, for example.) Dozens of applications over the years produced only two award wins, but I'm grateful for them. AUSU is now accepting applications for the May 1 deadline; check them out at www.ausu.org/services/scholarships-awards/.

External organizations.

This vast category covers awards sponsored by non-academic organizations. Industry, banks, retail, not-for-profits, service groups—the list of organizations offering scholarships is long. And the application requirements vary considerably. While most asked for an essay of some length, one scholarship I won required only a 150-word composition. AU, similar to many universities, maintains a list of external awards, but there are many more than appear on their list at <http://Registrar.athabascau.ca/studentawards/links.php>. *The Voice* features one scholarship with an approaching deadline in its Scholarship of the Week column at www.voicemagazine.org/.

My degree wouldn't have been possible without scholarships. Although I wasn't successful with many of my applications, I was still able to fund well over half of my university education with scholarships.

And that's part of what's behind that parchment hanging on my wall.

Barbara Lehtiniemi is a writer, photographer, and AU graduate (BGS 2018.) She lives on a windswept rural road in Eastern Ontario.

[You don't see her name on many articles in The Voice Magazine these days; she's moved on to one of the local newspapers in her community. But she still has a significant presence in The Voice Magazine, seeking out scholarships, events, and other tidbits for the shorts you find every week. When she does decide to write an article though, I can rest assured knowing it'll be relevant and helpful to all AU students, and this one, originally published in our April 19 issue, is no exception.]

Athabasca University Should Consider Competitive Gaming

Jeff Shermack



It's often said that collegiate sports can build a strong community for schools and raise their home school's esteem. That increased recognition from a renowned athletics program can attract more students and provide opportunities for the school to generate more revenue.

Sports teams are a common and traditional component to many Canadian universities that Athabasca University is currently missing. Of course, it would be ridiculous for AU to expect all of its distance and online-based students to somehow travel to Athabasca multiple times

every week to attend sports games in person. Not to mention the logistical web of training and organizing the teams. Traditional collegiate sports are not an option for Athabasca Students because AU is not a traditional campus-based university, but there may be a non-traditional option for integrating collegiate athletics with the AU experience. Athabasca staff and students could participate in collegiate e-sports.

E-sports refers to online competitive gaming, and it is a growing industry, with an estimated market value of \$493 million according to gamedesigning.org (2019). Tournaments are regional, national, and even international events where players compete to be the best in a variety of popular games like Fortnite and Counter-Strike. These events are streamed for free over the internet on platforms like Twitch.com, and their viewership has begun to rival that of major sports events in recent years. The final game of this year's NBA final set a new record with an audience of 14.3 million people (Lager, 2019). In comparison, last year's international championship tournament for Dota 2, one of the most popular e-sports games, had an audience of 55 million (escharts.com).

Players that compete in e-sports tournaments often do so as a part of a team. These teams can consist of players competing in a variety of games and a variety of countries. Such organizations

commonly operate like sponsors in traditional sports. The teams compensate the players and make it possible for them to practice and compete. In return, they take a cut of players' tournament winnings and use competitions as opportunities to promote their brand through the players. These organized e-sports teams have already begun to make the transition to collegiate athletics.

The National Association of Collegiate Esports (NACE) is the largest collegiate esports organization in the United States and it represents at least 63 institutions (gamedesigning.org, 2019). Ontario's Lambton College currently offers a two-year program in Esports Entrepreneurship and Administration and Durham College has already started their own varsity e-sports team and built an arena (Fadal, 2019). Both the University of Toronto and the University of British Columbia have begun to offer e-sports scholarships to prospective students. (Duncan, 2018).

The e-sports team currently at the top of the global rankings, Team Liquid, has earned over \$28 million dollars competing in 1567 tournaments (esportsearnings.com). These are earnings in an industry that could be valued at \$1.5 billion by 2020 and in which advertisers, investors, and sponsors contributed a total of \$1 billion in 2017 (gamedesigning.org, 2019).

Athabasca University is uniquely positioned to capitalize on this rapidly growing industry because of AU's online model for students. For many of us, Athabasca University is an online, distance-based experience, and engaging in e-sports would be the perfect opportunity for an online university to build something like a collegiate athletics community. AU could take advantage of the potential for e-sports to build a stronger AU community, bolster the school's reputation, attract more students, and maybe even generate revenue. The only requirement for staff and students to participate, as players, coaches, and spectators, would be something that most of us who are a part of the AU community already have access to: a computer and an internet connection.

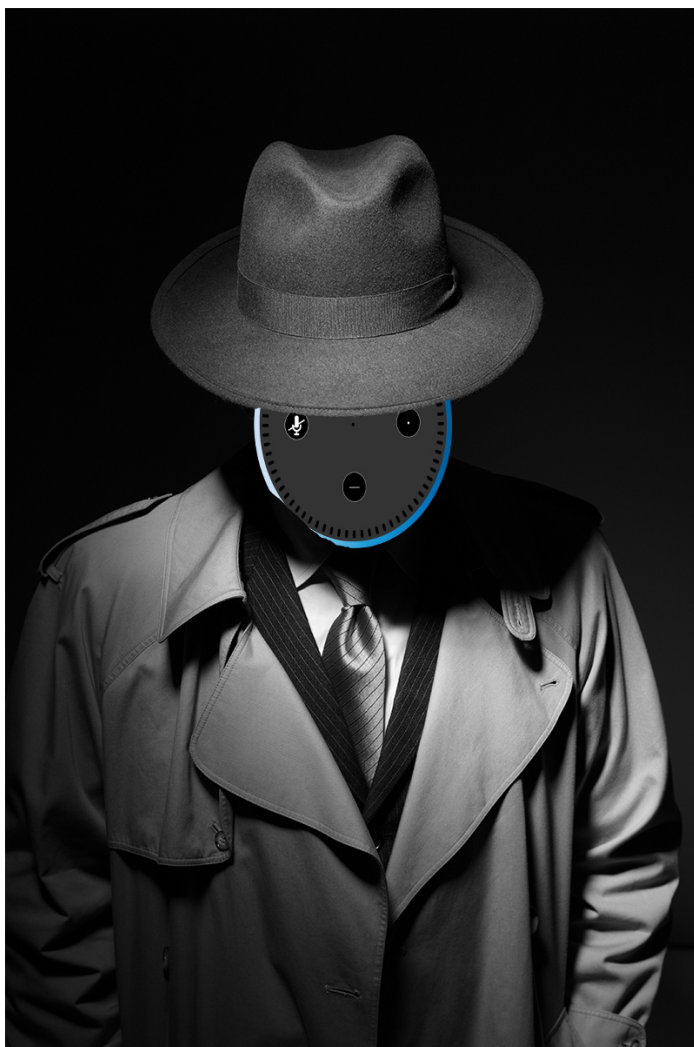
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[Every year we get a few writers who only submit one or two articles before moving on. I like to feature one of them in the Best Of edition because that kind of variety is part of what makes for the best issues of The Voice Magazine. This one, from the August 2 issue, is my personal pick, with hard facts, directly connected to AU, and pushing for action. All of that sums up what is the Best of The Voice if you ask me.]

Is Amazon Spying on You?

Francesca Carone



Amazon's electronic device is known as Echo. It is the conduit for their voice activated virtual assistant, Alexa, similar to Apple's Homepod for Siri, and Google Home with the Google Assistant. With this device a user can find answers to many questions as well as change your thermostat, stream music, and schedule appointments. Alexa software is continuously recording snatches of audio and listening. Students can find this handy device helpful when studying, finding out information, and keeping on top of things. But is this little device spying on us?

It turns out, Amazon employees actually are listening to recorded Alexa conversations, and, the scary thing is, you can't really turn it off. You can disable the use of your voice for development of new features (which is what they say they use our recordings for), but those people may still have their recordings analyzed by hand through the review process. (Day, online). So if you can disable it but it is not really disabled, what is the point? Amazon employees listen to hours and hours of clips which includes mundane conversations as well as possible criminal and sexual assault happening near the device.

There is even a possibility that Alexa conversations can go beyond only Amazon

employees and share your personal information with others. *The New York Times* wrote about a woman in Portland who claims her Echo device recorded a conversation and shared it with one of her husband's employees. (*New York Times*, online). With all the privacy concerns these days, I don't think it is wise for students, businesses, or anyone, really, to take the risk of having personal information shared or leaked to others without consent. What else can they be doing with your recordings? I found that "Some employees admitted to sharing amusing recordings with other employees via an internal chat room. Others said they had heard potentially disturbing conversations between people in their homes" (independent, online). Amazon was even ordered by court to hand over recordings in a suspected homicide, which they refused to do, surprisingly. All this makes me feel uneasy.

I don't know about you, but I think it is ridiculous that Alexa and other types of similar devices are recording you without your permission or knowledge. These conversations, possibly taken without your consent, are then uploaded to the cloud and accessible to Amazon employees, and possibly others. According to Time, "each reviewer parsing as many as 1,000 audio clips per shift, according to two workers based at Amazon's Bucharest office" (Time, online).

Although Amazon says they take security and privacy of their customers very seriously, I don't seem to trust that. It is up to you to decide if you do. While your full name and address are not

connected to your recording file, your first name, device serial number, and account number are. This, to me, makes it easy for an employee to look you up and retrieve more information such as your address.

Apple's Siri also has humans analyzing conversations. Their recordings however, according to Google, are not connected to any identifiable information, and the audio is distorted. (Time, online). Amazon too claims that listeners don't have access to personal information, but I disagree. Students can find usefulness in these devices, of course, so I guess it is up to each person to decide if their privacy is a concern to them or not.

This all reminds me of my course in Issues to Access & Privacy Protection at Athabasca. That course helped me learn about why it is important to protect people's privacy and freedoms. Professionals, including psychologists, are required to keep information only as long as it is necessary. There is no information on how long Amazon is going to keep these conversations, but there is a way to delete them. But this device seems like it's going in the opposite direction of current privacy legislation.

Once again, it is up to everyone to know what is happening and decide if they want to participate or not. Hopefully Amazon and Google, as well as other device makers, will make their plans for recording customers clearer at the time of purchase to avoid issues with privacy breaches in the future.

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Francesca Carone is a full-time mother and student completing her BPA in Criminal Justice. Most of her time is spent outdoors with her children and dog

[First published in our April 19th issue, this is an article that took a current issue and brought it back to us through the lens of an AU student. A Voice reader reminded me of it for the Best Of issue, and given how the use of these things has only increased, this reminder isn't at all out of place here.]

AU-thentic Events

Upcoming AU Related Events

Research Webinar Series:

The invasion of sexual boundaries and the cultural sensitivity of words

Wed, Jan 8, 11:00 am to 12:00 pm MST

Online

Hosted by AU

news.athabascau.ca/events/research-webinar-series-the-invasion-of-sexual-boundaries-and-the-cultural-sensitivity-of-words

Access through above link

Live chat - Doctorate in Business Administration

Wed, Jan 8, 2:00 to 3:00 pm MST

Online

Hosted by AU Faculty of Business

news.athabascau.ca/events/live-chat-doctorate-in-business-administration-20200108

Access through above link

AUSU Member Consultation #2 for Bylaw Revisions

Fri, Jan 10, 5:30 to 6:30 pm MST

Online

Hosted by AUSU

www.ausu.org/event/member-consultation-2-for-bylaw-revisions/

No pre-registration required; access info at above link

All events are free unless otherwise noted

Women of Interest

Mary Agnes Snively

Barb Godin



MISS MARY AGNES SNIVELY
Superintendent of Nurses of the Toronto General Hospital

Mary Agnes Snively was born on November 12, 1847, in St Catharines Ontario and died 85 years later on September 26, 1933. She never married nor had children. Snively was an educator and a nurse who was known as the "Mother of Nurses in Canada." After graduating high school Snively taught for almost twenty years. At the urging of a close friend who was a nurse, in 1882 Snively attended New York's Bellevue Training School for Nurses. Upon graduation she was hired as Superintendent at the Toronto General Hospital. Mary Agnes found the conditions at Toronto General Hospital unacceptable and began implementing changes. Seven nurses and twenty-seven nurses in training, were required to care for almost 400 patients. The hospital was completely unorganized with no schedules, record keeping, or procedures for obtaining supplies. The Nurses' living quarters were deplorable. The rooms were barely heated and the nurses slept on straw beds and ate their meals in a small room opposite the boiler room.

The changes Snively put into action included establishing an updated curriculum for the student nurses that incorporated scheduled lectures by physicians. She also included a written

examination at the end of a two-year training period. Snively strived to assign menial tasks to other workers so the nurses could concentrate on caring for patients. Intending to attract middle class women into the nursing profession, Snively convinced the hospital to build a residence for student nurses. The new residence was completed in 1887 and included a library, dining rooms and sitting rooms. As a result, well-educated women were beginning to show an interest in attending, and by 1894 the Toronto General Hospital Training School for Nurses became the largest in the country. She also cofounded the International Council of Nurses, and, from 1900 to 1904, she was the Honorary Treasurer.

Mary Agnes Snively was known for her compassion and dedication to the well being of patients. She was named as the first president of the Society of Superintendents of Training Schools for Nurses in the United States and Canada, holding that position from 1908 to 1912 and was able to bring together provincial organizations and alumnae which eventually formed into the Canadian Nurses Association in 1924.

The following quote was taken from a speech that Snively delivered at a 1904 graduation ceremony in Cleveland Ohio and was published in the American Journal of Nursing:

"the noblest, most womanly, most Christ-life, of all the avocations open to women....What makes a woman a good nurse? Practice. What makes a woman a good woman? Practice...Life is not a holiday, it's an education. The world is not a playground, it is a school-room, and character develops in the stream of the world's life."

The Canadian Historic Sites and Monuments Board hung a plaque in honor of Mary Agnes Snively, at the Toronto General Hospital.

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

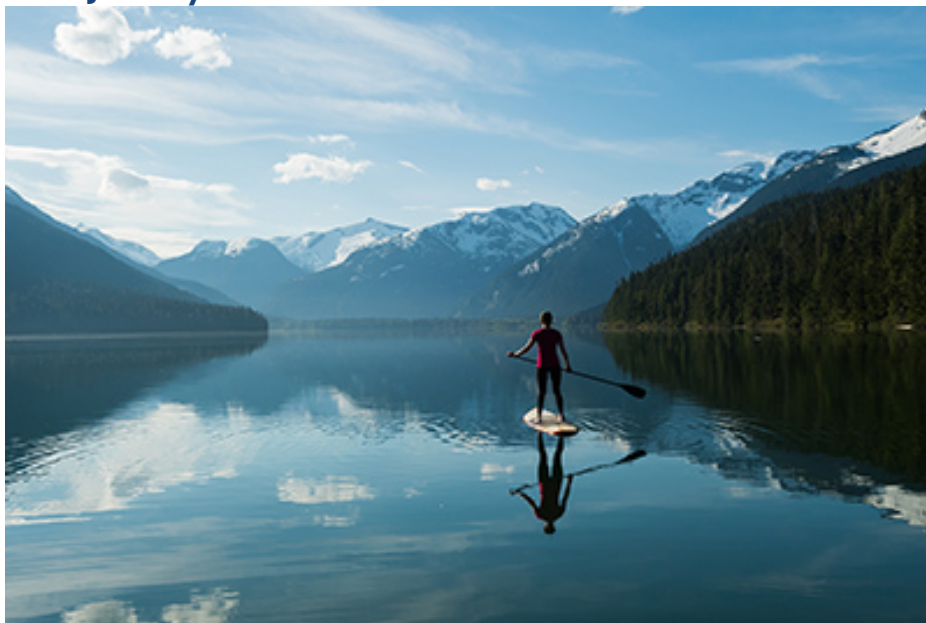
[Most students at AU are women. It always made sense, then, to have a column dedicated to highlighting courageous and/or successful women, and as such, we really can't claim it's the "Best of the Voice" without one. This one, from the March 22 edition, was the most popular of all those published over the past year.]



The Study Dude

Your Journey Will Lead to Success

Marie Well



I know this much about your journey: You likely have studied or will be studying at AU. You have worked or will likely work a career. And you've suffered hardships and heartaches.

I write because I pray your journey leads to success. Author Lana Otoy says "One way to make sure your journey is fulfilling is to make sure you're living your life congruent with your personality, deepest values, strengths, passions, and mission" (location 1785 of 3222, 55%).

Before you journey into an AU major, let me urge you to take a career test. Career tests can reveal your perfect major—and dream career. "Thankfully, there is a high-quality measure available online for a relatively small fee This is the Jackson Vocational Interest Survey, or JVIS You can take the test online here: <http://FriesenPerformance.com.jvis.com/take>" (location 1682 of 3222, 52%).

When you discover your interests, enroll in your ideal faculty; pursue your perfect career. And give it all you've got. "Maybe your dream is to get into the top medical school or take your start-up business to the next level. Whatever the dream, the principles are the same. You get only one shot at this life, so make the best of it. No regrets" (location 77 of 3222, 2%).

But you will face hardships. We all do. I have dreams of giving 100% unconditional love to a career. To achieve this, I hope to never speak ill of corporate faults, but to nurture passion instead for corporate strengths. Despite these goals, my weakness remains stress. Anxiety attacks. Fear of failure. Somehow, I must overcome these faults. Somehow, we all must overcome our faults. And I believe unconditional love paves the way.

But we each have unique values—and personalities. "Your personality and values at times seem to be incongruent. For example, you can value calm and stability, but have a personality style that makes you susceptible to negative emotions and stress" (location 1300 of 3222, 40%). That's me. You may have your own personality challenges, but none of them make you any less than incredible. We are all on our own separate journeys. Your journey is as precious as anyone else's. But tread the path that best suits your personality and values.

But regardless of the path you choose, struggle will be part of your journey. "The reality is that you are going to face pain and setbacks no matter which path you choose Even if you make the best choice for you, realize and accept that it will still be a struggle Even if you ... find your dream job or reach your goal, there will still be parts of it that you don't like or that are hard or make you uncomfortable" (location 1773 of 3222, 55%). I battle stress. And I worry about my skillset. But I brim with passion which keeps my chin high. Your passions will build you up, too.

Despite our passions, we all face hardships and heartaches. But these trials can pay off. I suffered during my university degrees. Terribly. I got a master's degree, but I didn't reach my dream of

a Ph.D. So, I'm working through the heartache. I struggle to place no blame on others, but instead to find forgiveness, understanding, and gratitude. "Whether you suffer depends on how you see it. If you live your life and pursue goals that are in line with who you are, what you value, and your purpose or mission, then the struggle will be worth it" (location 1785 of 3222, 55%).

So, know your strengths, values, passions, interests, and personality. My hope is that, by knowing yourself, your journey leads to success.

References

Otoya, Lana. (2018). *The Mindset of Small Talk: How Mastering Small Talk Has Nothing to Do with Coming Up with Things to Say*. E-book.

[The Study Dude has changed a lot over the years. From what used to be almost a point form summation of a book, to an article bringing together personal connections with advice from authors and professionals. This one, another from our August 2 edition, was pointed out by a student as one of her favorites from the whole series, which she also enjoys. Of course it had to be here.]

Student Sizzle — AU's Hot Social Media Topics

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

AthaU Facebook Group

Angela relates problems that cropped up during a recent exam (including noise from another apartment), which triggers a conversation thread about woeful exam experiences. Spiff reminds other students to schedule their exams with BOTH Athabasca University and ProctorU (or other invigilator.) Marina seeks student feedback on CHEM 217 labs; lots of reassuring comments on level of work required.

Other posts include voice typing, rhetorical analysis, online exam platforms, senior courses, and courses BIOL 204, HADM 326, PHIL 333, and SPAN 200.

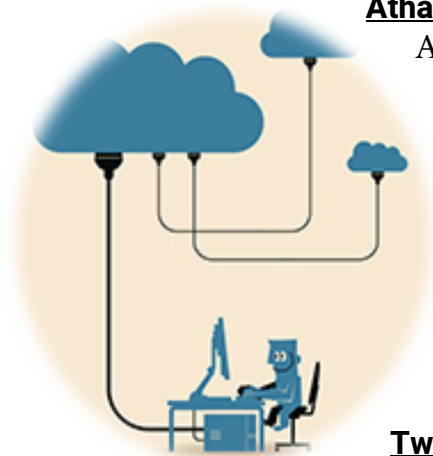
Twitter

@AthabascaU tweets: "#AthabascaU has announced exciting changes for Convocation 2020, including a new date and an additional event in Toronto for our learners in Eastern Canada. t.co/t28AqBs8yi."

@austudentsunion tweets: "AUSU is still accepting applications for the Chief Returning Officer for our 2020 General Election! Deadline to apply: January 9, 2020. Click link for details! <https://bit.ly/2PHIFdR>."

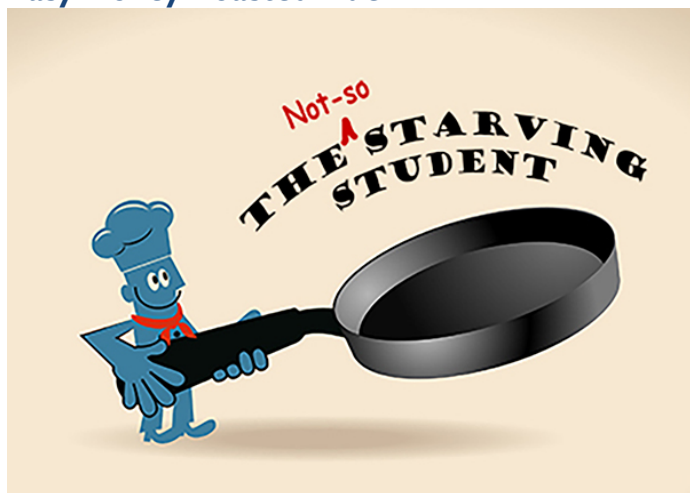
Youtube

If you're starting undergrad business studies at AU in 2020, you'll want to watch this Undergraduate Program Orientation for New Students from AU Faculty of Business.



The Not-So Starving Student Easy Honey Roasted Duck

Xin Xu



Canadians As the days are becoming cooler and roasted foods take over the dinner menu, I decided to try my hand at roasting. To make things more complex, I opted to roast a whole duck. Initially, I was very concerned with my lack of experience in the kitchen to attempt such a feat. Unlike chicken, duck protein is quite different. Not only is there a higher fat content, but the added toughness of duck meat made it tough to create a tender and juicy texture that I would be proud to bring for my meal preparation. Luckily the recipe was simple and satisfied my craving for roast duck in the last week. If you're like me and enjoy comfort food

but don't quite enjoy the lengthy process required to prepare a meal, then this recipe is for you! The best part about this recipe is that by setting 15-minute timers, you can still study, multitask and do other things while the duck is roasting in the oven.

Total preparation and cooking time: 3 hours

Ingredients:

1 whole utility duck
2 tbsp salt
1 tbsp sugar
1 tbsp honey
1 tsp coarse black pepper
1 tbsp chopped cilantro
2 tbsp cooking wine
2 tbsp paprika
1 tbsp chopped basil
1 tbsp rosemary
1 tbsp olive oil
3 cloves minced garlic
1 tbsp grated ginger
Optional: chilli pepper to taste

Easy gravy sauce:

2 tbsp duck fat during cooking
100 mL of water
100 mL of cream or milk
3 tbsp flour
1 tsp salt
½ tsp ground pepper

Instructions:

1. Ground all ingredients with a food processor or with a pestle and mortar into a fine paste
2. Optional: carve the duck into two for easier cooking
3. Rub ingredient paste onto the duck and allow it to marinade for 30 minutes (for better taste marinade for 2-3 hours)
4. Save 1 tbsp of paste to be applied later





5. Put entire duck into a pressure cooker and steam for 3 minutes on low pressure. Another option is to steam it with a regular pot
6. After 3 minutes, remove the melted duck grease and put the duck into the oven at 375 degrees F for 15 minutes
7. Save the removed duck fat for the gravy dipping sauce
8. After 15 minutes, rotate the duck so that it cooks evenly and put into oven at 375 degrees F for another 15 minutes
9. After 15 minutes, rotate the duck again so that it cooks evenly on the other side at 375 degrees F
10. Repeat step 8
11. Apply 1 tbsp of paste evenly to the surface of the duck
12. In the final 15 minutes, use the broil function on the oven to crisp the skin of the duck

Preparing the gravy

1. Add the saved duck fat during the cooking process into a separate sauce pan
2. Add water, milk, salt and flour to the mixture and whisk at low to medium heat
3. Allow gravy to thicken and season it with ground pepper
4. When the duck is ready, drip the gravy over the roasted duck and serve.



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

[I love that Xin Xu always supplies tasty pictures to go with tasty articles. Apparently, so do a few Voice readers, as this one was brought up as something that should be in the Best Of. Bon Appetit!]



Toronto's Amber Alert

Brittany Daigle



At 11:30pm on Thursday evening, while I was lying in bed and getting ready to fall asleep, residents within the Greater Toronto Area received two identical amber alerts back-to-back from the Peel Regional Police, stating “Emergency Alert: Victim is Riya Rajkumar age 11. Suspect is Roopesh Rajkumar age 41. Vehicle is a silver Honda civic plate #ARBV 598. Last known location east bound 401. If observed please call 9-1-1.”

If any of you have previously received an amber alert, you would know that it is no regular sounding alarm ringtone. Amber alerts are designed to be extremely loud and attention-grabbing to warn people of potential danger or to get people to assist with police searches. Last April, a system was implemented in Canada for mobile electronic devices, which required all cellphone carriers to distribute the emergency alert messages to customers. For good reason, customers cannot opt out of these loud, persistent alerts.

Since those tests, I had not received an actual amber alert, so it definitely caught my attention (and my dogs’ attention for that matter). I checked my phone and then searched Google for more information; I found out that her father had failed to return his daughter to her mother after he took her out for her birthday, which was also Valentine’s Day. The father has also had made comments indicating that he was going to harm his daughter, along with himself.

As I continued to scroll, I began reading the comments that were posted on the news article and I was shocked. Hundreds of people were angry that there was an amber alert sent out at such a late hour, affecting their precious beauty sleep. The Peel Regional Police’s social media accounts were flooded with angry comments. Some people even felt entitled enough to call 911 to complain about being woken up, which is absolutely ridiculous and should be illegal.

Shortly after the amber alert went out the Peel Regional Police sent out an update on social media, stating “Update: Roopesh Rajkumar (the father) has been located and arrested. Riya Rajkumar has been located deceased at a residence in Brampton” and that “Our communications bureau is receiving numerous calls to 9-1-1, complaining about the late hour of the Amber Alert. As a direct result of someone receiving the alert, we were able to locate the suspect and his vehicle. The system works. Thank you to all those that called with tips.” Could you imagine calling 9-1-1 to complain that a text woke you up? There are actual, serious emergencies that may be delayed due to the phone lines being occupied. This just makes me want to scream. I cannot understand how people could be so selfish. As stated by E-Comm 9-1-1, “Don’t let non-emergencies compete with real ones. Know the difference between when to call 9-1-1 and when to report your situation to the non-emergency line.”

That poor little girl was taken and murdered by the hands of her father, and all people care about is their sleep. These emergency alerts send out useful information. Whether it is to warn people about a terrorist attack, natural disaster, or someone going missing—it is information that people should be aware of so they can react accordingly. At any point it could be your life that they are

trying to save. I just wish that those angry, sleepy people would have just taken a moment to consider if it was their child, family member, or friend that had gone missing and was in danger. They would have wanted the entire globe to receive an amber alert and certainly would not have been annoyed if they were woken up during the middle of the night. At the end of the day, system works and should be respected and taken seriously.

Canadian actor and comedian, Gerry Dee, posted a tweet in response to all of the people who complained about the amber alert, stating “When we all received that amber alert last night, a little girl, in the care of her father, was about to be murdered. By her father. On her birthday. I can’t grasp this. Some of you lost some sleep because of the sound of the alert. But, you woke up. Unlike her. RIP Riya.”

Police posted an update on their social media, stating “Over the last 12+ hours, we have received numerous messages of support from the community. We hear you. Thank you for your kind words. Our thoughts and prayers are with the family of Riya Rajkumar and all those that are affected by the events.” Thankfully, there are still some rational, respectful people out there.

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

[This article was not only nominated by a Voice reader, but it also generated a number of Facebook comments when it was first published as our feature article on February 22.]

Resisting the Tyranny of the Money God

Wanda Waterman



“A wise person should have money in their head, but not in their heart.”

- Jonathan Swift

Not Just the Rich

Slavery to mammon isn’t the prerogative of the rich, much as us poor folks would like to think it is. For every CEO ready to step over their dead mother on their way to their next million there’s at least one ditch digger ready to throw their coworkers under the bus to keep their own job.

Labour leaders often remind us that rich capitalists bargain with their surpluses while the poor bargain with the bread from their tables, so, in one sense, the poor really do risk more by taking a stand against slavery to money. The result is a mutually destructive tango of greed and fear between the

goals of the financially independent and the subsistence needs of the financially dependent.

How might we turn all this around? Rich and poor alike can start by deciding that money won’t rule our lives.

What money slavery looks like

Slavery to money isn’t just evident in the lengths some will pursue to hang on to what they have or to acquire more than they need. Let’s just say that money might have a little too much control over you when you:

- buy a house only because that's what "responsible adults" are supposed to do
- spend the bulk of your life working at jobs you hate to afford said house
- grant special deference to the wealthy, believing that those with money are somehow better
- buy what's in style instead of what you really want to wear
- buy something that's on sale even though you don't need it, convinced that the markdown will somehow enrich your bank account
- when you hear someone going on about how much they spent on something unnecessary, you feel envy for their resources as opposed to concern about their wastefulness

Being Aware

Escaping money slavery means taking a good hard look at what we have and deciding we'll make it work for us, but this is only a first step. We also have to become aware of all the little prods and pokes in our lives that attempt to throw us off balance and make us prostrate ourselves to the money god all over again. We need to be conscious of where those messages are coming from (some of them are whispering away in our own heads) so that we can question and refute them. Here are just a few examples of money-god propaganda:

- If you buy this product or service, your life will improve. We don't know anyone for whom this has happened, so you'll have to take our word for it.
- All your friends have one. Why don't you?
- Why are you playing your saxophone when there's money to be made?
- Sure, your job is mind-numbing, exhausting, and pointless, but you just have to bite the bullet.
- Why are you friends with people who can't afford to have you over for dinner?
- We don't have enough and it's your fault.
- An artist will never make as much money as an accountant.
- Why are you such a cheapskate?

Getting Free

Some tips for proactive financial freedom:

- Don't just sit back and expect money to come to you and stay.
- Do place limits on what you're willing to do to earn money.
- Get off the beaten path and use your imagination to create work you love.
- The best way to double your money is to fold it in half and stick it back in your pocket.
- Spend only on things that have value for *you*.
- Avoid debt.
- Try to make every dollar do the work of ten.
- If you want to build wealth for freedom and independence pay special attention to how every penny is invested, but don't be afraid of a little risk.

The gist of it all? Money rules us when we sacrifice our highest callings to it, and we rule it by putting it to work in the service of our highest callings.

However little you possess, your money is yours to govern in the interests of your own enlightenment. See this as a divine right, and act accordingly.

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

[Another pick from Voice readers. First published on July 5th, I like how this article has both some practical advice and meshes it with critical questions toward the society that requires that advice.]



The Fit Student

How to be Charming



Marie Well

I know a soul who charms the world. She's the alpha female, the one every toe points toward in a chitchat. She can read your mind, fix your problems, and make you feel like you belong. Men fall for her nonstop, men half her age, men twice her age, men who show up at her hangouts, uninvited. She clearly charms.

Have you ever wondered what makes charmers sizzle? I've stumbled on a YouTube channel called *Charisma on Command*. And I've considered one day enrolling in their course, but it's too costly for

me. They do have free clips on YouTube, though, that profile celebrities.

In addition to watching clips from *Charisma on Command*, I've bought a book called *The Positive Trait Thesaurus* by Angela Ackerman and Becca Puglisi. This book lays out positive traits, including the traits of charming souls. For instance, the book reveals, "Charming characters always seem to know what to do or say to put people at ease and win trust. They can be caring and considerate and make the people around them feel special and unique. These characters are the center of attention not because of how they look or the power they wield, but because people are attracted to their energy and appealing manner" (19%).

I'm going to list some key traits you can emulate to become a charmer. Then, I'll add quotes from *Charisma on Command* and comments from my own experiences with charmers. The charm traits in bold font below are from *The Positive Trait Thesaurus*.

Charm trait #1: Humor.

Use jokes that put you on the same team as those around you and that elevate the team. Another trick is to stick with absurdly complimentary humor, such as, "Will you marry me?" I've begun analyzing funny people to gain a sense of what makes them so delightful. For instance, my brother told me a funny today. He used to act as a caregiver to me and my siblings, although he himself was only in elementary school. And he served as my parent throughout my teens, clothing me, housing me, feeding me, although he was barely out of his teens himself. So, he told me that, when he gets asked if he regrets not having kids, he replies, "Nope. I had three kids when I was ten years old."

I love this joke because it plays on the impossible while highlighting a noble trait: responsibility. Make mental note of the funnies you hear; jot down what makes them work. And, of course, try to emulate them.

Charm trait #2: Good listening skills. Asking questions to show that one is paying attention and interested.

Don't change the topic with your comment. Whatever the person says, stick with that topic until they choose to change it. Build on what they say, support their point of view, echo their feelings.

Charm trait #3: Greeting others with enthusiasm.

For same sex, try introducing yourself with some form of physical touch such as a handshake. The alpha female makes everyone feel special. She'll walk into a room and call out, "Hey Cody! How did your presentation go? Did you nail it?" She'll remember details about your last conversation. She'll recall the dates and times of special moments coming up in your life. She'll remember your face in crowds of thousands of people—after meeting you only once. Do these things. People love it when you make them feel important. And everyone is important.

Charm trait #4: Playfulness.

Part of playfulness involves reading positive intent in ambiguous or bad situations. If someone lifts your hair and says, "Ooh. You need a new style," laugh a little and say, "I know you want me looking like a 10. I won't disappoint." Another trick is to reframe things to the positive side. Turn a job at McDonald's flipping burgers into the best time of your life. To charm others, everything you say should be upbeat and inspiring: "Every year of my life since I met my true love has been the best year of my life." Another trick: in private, engage in self-amusement, and gradually bring that play into your social world. For instance, if you do a goofy dance in private, show it off to your wife and kids.

Charm trait #5: Smiling and nodding in encouragement as someone speaks.

The alpha female will say, "yes ... yes ... uh huh ... for sure" when listening to others, a big smile on her face. She'll say, "I hear you," "I agree," and "exactly." Or she'll say, "Yes, and that's why..." and fill in her own view. She delights.

Charm trait #6: Noticing personal details and offering compliments.

Spread the praise, and don't worry if you get yours. It'll freely flow back to you. I read once that it's best to compliment and then go back to a normal conversation. In other words, avoid praising nonstop; it makes people uncomfortable. Sprinkle in the praise instead. And make it genuine. After all, everybody has traits worthy of compliments. Thus, directing praise towards others builds charm, while elevating others makes you more likable.

Charm trait #7: Attentiveness; making sure the needs of others are being met.

Yesterday, I looked up the definition of the word "unselfish," and it defined who I'm becoming. I'll feed the magpies and bunnies on the first snowfall rather than feed myself. Putting others needs first feels thrilling. It builds love and trust like nothing else. It brings peace and harmony. And—*bonus*—it makes you more charming. But to be truly unselfish, one should act selflessly without self-praise.

The bottom line? If you're not yet a charmer, tap into these seven traits. If you're already a charmer, spread the praise playfully, as every toe points your way.

References

Ackerman, Angela, & Puglisi, Angela. (2013). *The Positive Trait Thesaurus: A Writer's Guide to Character Attributes*. JADD Publishing. E-book.

[A Voice reader wanted to bring my attention to this recent article from the November 15th issue for the Best of The Voice, but, honestly, it was a waste of time. I was already putting this one in. Still, it's good to see that we have some agreement!]





Dear
Barb

Barbara Godin

The Difficulty with Divorce

Dear Barb:

I want a divorce, but my husband doesn't and I don't know what to do! We have been married for seven years and have two beautiful children. I just don't feel the love for my husband any longer. We have been growing apart and rarely do anything together. We are almost like a divorced couple just cohabitating. Nothing happened to cause this; I just don't have any feelings for him. Well I shouldn't say that, I do care about him, but only as the father of my children. Dan says he still loves me and wants to make our marriage work. How can I convince him I want out of this marriage, and what should I do in a legal sense? Needing advice, Megan.

Hey Megan:

My first question is, are you 100% sure this is what you want? Have you been to counselling alone or together? The decision to seek a divorce is one of the most life changing decisions you can make and should not be taken lightly. Are you sure you are ready for all that is involved in going through the divorce process—as it is difficult for everyone? There are several things you need to ask yourself, beginning with whether you still have feelings for your spouse, you say you don't love him, but you obviously care about him. Are the problems you are experiencing a result of your relationship, or possibly financial- or work-related unhappiness. There are people you can see to

help discover what is really causing this unhappiness. Therapists, counselors and even mediators may be able to help you to make sure this is the right decision.

You may be feeling excited for a new start and be thinking about what it will be like with a new partner, but consider all your options carefully as research has indicated that children are never happy about their parents divorcing. Children want their families intact and their parents to stay together. One of the consequences of divorce will be that most likely the custody of your children will be split 50/50. That means you will only see your children half the time. Plus there will be people in their lives that you don't know and there really is nothing you can do about it. Your ex will be making decisions for the children that you may or may not agree with. Eventually you will both meet other people and that's another hurdle to cross, as your children may not accept a new person, or you may not like your ex's new partner. I don't mean to sound negative, but all these things need to be considered. I am not saying that you and your husband cannot work through these issues, as many people do, but you need to be prepared. However, if the situation is abusive, then you have no choice but to seek immediate intervention for the sake of safety. The place to begin is with a visit to your family physician that can refer you to a therapist or marriage counselor. Good luck in the future and thanks for writing Megan.

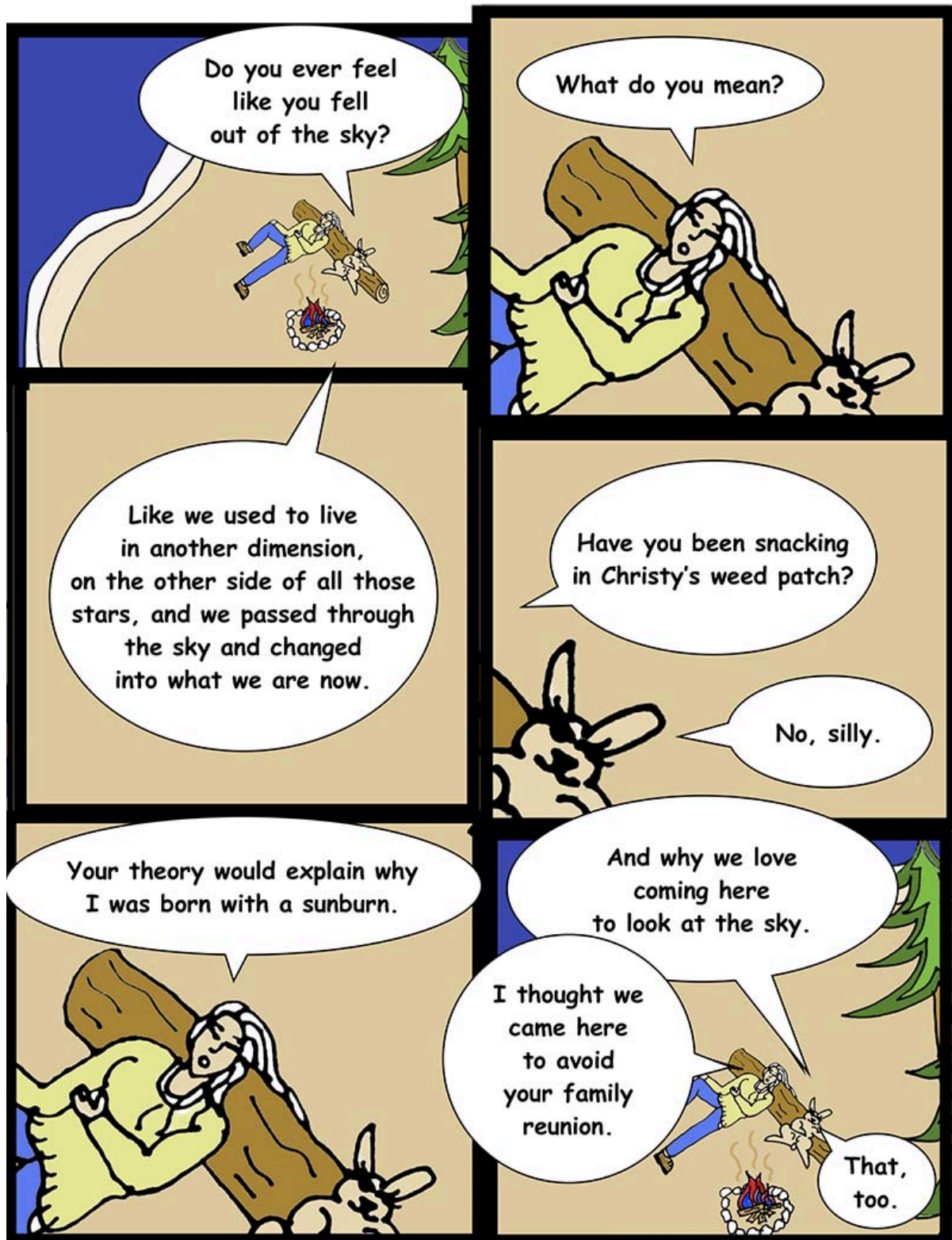
Email your questions to voice@voicemagazine.org. Some submissions may be edited for length or to protect confidentiality; your real name and location will never be printed. This column is for entertainment only. The author is not a professional counsellor and this column is not intended to take the place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

[Dear Barb articles are typically the ones I see the most comments about on Facebook, so I obviously couldn't do a "Best of" without one. This one, from October 25, was singled out by a long-time Voice Reader for inclusion.]



Poet Maeve
Mysterious Origins

Wanda Waterman



[Pointed out by a Voice Reader, the August 13 installment of Poet Maeve just gets me on so many levels. It had to be here.]

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Classifieds are free for AU students!
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