



# THE VOICE

Vol 28 Issue 18 2020-05-01

## **The Need for Media Literacy**

Dealing with Disinformation & Conspiracy

## **Council Connection**

The Changeover Meeting

## **Beats from the Basement**

Delerium

*Plus:*  
*Mayday! M'Aider!*  
*Homemade is Better*  
*and much more!*



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# LETTERS TO THE EDITOR



**We love to hear from you!**  
**Send your questions and comments to [voicemagazine.org](http://voicemagazine.org),**  
**and please indicate if we may publish your letter!**

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

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



## Editorial

### Disinformation Distancing

Karl Low



What are the effects of having a population not well versed in media literacy? What happens when people unquestioningly accept everything they see, or, just as bad, unquestioningly deny everything they see reported? It got driven home to me in a couple of ways this week.

The first, is that Michael Moore et al. released a documentary on YouTube in honor of Earth Day called *Planet of the Humans*. The central conceit of this documentary is that the green movement has been taken over by corporate interests, and any attempt to clean up our planet short of significant depopulation and a complete rejection of civilization, especially capitalist civilization, is doomed to fail.

Critics quickly dug into its claims and noted that the data they were using on the efficiency and costs of solar and wind power generators were woefully out of date, and some of the various “facts” they propose are really just opinions, often from those who are not actually trained in the field they’re speaking about.

Yet despite this, I see many people touting the film as if it somehow disproves climate change in general, using it’s attacks on some notable figures in the environmental movement as a

type of blanket condemnation, without even noting, or perhaps knowing, that the message of the movie is that climate change is far more dire than we’ve been lead to believe.

Closer to home, some relatives of mine recently posted to social media an argument against reporting those who seem to be violating public health rules, characterizing it as being a “snitch” and turning neighbour against neighbour or family against family. When I pressed them on it, the response was an argument about a slippery slope to government oppression of the populace. These are people who I know have good hearts, but when I pointed out that reporting these people is not turning against your neighbours, but instead is a means of defending your neighbours against those who’d unwittingly bring disease and death to it, I was accused of attempting to squelch their opinion. Which, truth be told, I was. It was an opinion I believe as not only erroneous, but, in this situation, outright dangerous. I would be quite happy if it wasn’t spread any further. But I feel doing so may have damaged my relationship with them. Is hampering disinformation worth that kind of cost? I’m not sure. In this case, I think so. But part of what allows disinformation to flourish is that when we have to correct our friends and family, we risk losing precious connections. Who wants to risk that? But if we don’t, what we get is, well, what we see--increased polarization with each side having it’s own “facts” that may or may not be real.

So the feature article in the Voice this week was in the back of my mind as I saw and thought about these things. There used to be a time, before the internet, when marginal and, yes, dangerous, opinions would be seen as marginal. Those who had them would find few in their community who would agree with them, and so fairly quickly be dissuaded from trying to spread them further. The internet, however, let’s these few people in each community find each other where they can reinforce their own beliefs and then take comfort that if so many people they know agree with them, they must be correct. Because, honestly, our brains aren’t designed to fully comprehend the vast numbers of minds we can connect with online.

This means media literacy has become more valuable than ever, yet it remains a subject that so few seem versed on. We haven’t yet, as a society, realized that it’s as vital a part of our education system as math, science, history, or trades training. Until we do, I fear things will trend worse before better. That’s depressing. Enjoy the read!

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

## The Need for Media Literacy Amidst Misinformation and Conspiracy Theories

Natalia Iwanek



During tragedies, society often experiences a noticeable uptick in the number of conspiracy theorists as humanity struggles to make sense of our rapidly changing and often unexplainable world.

When events are so beyond our comprehension and current reality, what might typically seem like an outlandish conspiracy theory may, in fact, bring comfort. Surely, a sinister plot orchestrated by powerful organizations is easier to digest than the cruel and unpredictable nature of life.

From secret organizations, such as the Illuminati—composed of the global elite, encoding cryptic messages in popular culture or sex cults involving European royal families and clergy—to disbelief in climate change, amidst cries of fake news, conspiracy theories pervade our daily lives.

In recent years, the false flag attacks theory has risen to prominence; namely “the idea that powerful forces routinely arrange massacres or terrorist atrocities, and make it appear as if some other individual or group did them, in order to achieve their sinister political goals.” The false flag narrative often works in concert with the crisis actor theory, in which these powerful organizations employ performers as bystanders, victims, and witnesses during these events. Accusations of crisis actors are most often seen in cases of mass shootings, which theorists believe are an elaborate hoax to restrict the right to bear arms.

Most recently, fears of 5G towers causing viruses to fears of mass vaccination programs supported by Bill Gates have been steadily gaining ground on social media.

From a psychological perspective, various studies have shown that people turn to conspiracy theories when feeling anxious, powerless, and lacking control. Conspiracy theorists often feel a sense of powerlessness, alienation from society, disenchantment with the government, as well as political cynicism. Although critics typically dismiss conspiracy theorists as deluded individuals, their ideas are not simply a set of individual attitudes. These ideas are a set of stories and shared assumptions that persist and evolve over the years, often through social activities, such as internet forums, chat rooms, campaigns, and organizations.

Research into conspiracy theories has revealed that they may have some basis on epistemic (understanding one’s environment), existential (feeling safe and in control of one’s environment), and social (the desire to belong, or maintain a positive image of themselves and their particular group) motives.

Epistemically, humans often want to see the world as stable and consistent, and we want to understand our surroundings. When events threatening this logic occur, we naturally look for

reasons. In this case, conspiracy theorists find fault in hidden actions by multiple secret actors, such as the Illuminati and Bill Gates.

Existentially, we need to feel safe and secure in the world, as well as feeling a sense of control over our environments. It may be comforting to point out these dangerous and untrustworthy organizations and individuals and feel that we are doing *something*.

Socially, conspiracy theorists may see themselves and their groups as moral and righteous in comparison to those powerful, but dangerous actors.

Unfortunately, not enough research has been done to see if conspiracy theories actually help individuals with these psychological motives. However, the empirical research that has been done concludes that, to a large extent, social, existential, and epistemic motives are influential. In addition, conspiracy theories and their theorists are a newer field of study; social psychologists only began systematic research in the 1990s.

Although conspiracy theories may appear harmless to some, critics are concerned that conspiracy theorists often dismiss the dangers of misinformation: the unintentional sharing of wrong information, and disinformation, the intentional creation of false information. Coupled with recent technological advances, such as affordable high-speed internet, misinformation and disinformation are spreading rapidly, reaching more people than ever before. On social media in particular, people are exposed to increasingly manipulated content, images, and documents containing an element of truth, but being weaponized for a specific, sensationalistic purpose and agenda.

The spread of misinformation has been particularly harmful during this recent pandemic. The overwhelming power of language is only too apparent as increases in vigilantism, hate crimes, and violence against ethnic and racial groups (especially increases in anti-Asian sentiment due to Trump's "China-virus" speech as well as various other misinformation). According to Alfred Hermida, professor and director of the journalism program at the University of British Columbia, "When there's a lack of information and there's fear, rumours come in to fill that gap."

## AU-thentic Events Upcoming AU Related Events

### **Coping with change during COVID—How AU can help you**

Fri, May 1, 11:00 am to 12:00 pm MDT  
Online via PlatformQ

Hosted by AU

[news.athabascau.ca/events/coping-with-change-during-covid-how-au-can-support-you](https://news.athabascau.ca/events/coping-with-change-during-covid-how-au-can-support-you)

Register through above link

### **The Grad Lounge**

Fri, May 1, 1:00 to 2:00 pm MDT

Online via Microsoft Teams

Hosted by AU Faculty of Graduate Studies

[news.athabascau.ca/events/the-grad-lounge-may-1](https://news.athabascau.ca/events/the-grad-lounge-may-1)

No pre-registration necessary; access through above link

### **Research Webinar Series:**

#### **Doing Nothing Does Something:**

#### **Embodiment and Data in the COVID-19 Pandemic**

Mon, May 4, 11:00 am to 12:00 pm MDT

Online via Microsoft Teams

Hosted by AU

[news.athabascau.ca/events/research-webinar-series-embodiment-data-covid-19](https://news.athabascau.ca/events/research-webinar-series-embodiment-data-covid-19)

No pre-registration necessary; access through above link

### **Nursing and Health Studies Library Orientation Webinar**

Tue, May 5, 4:00 to 5:30 pm MDT

Online

Hosted by AU Library

[library.athabascau.ca/orientations.html](https://library.athabascau.ca/orientations.html)

No pre-registration necessary; access through above link

### **AUSU 2020 Annual Members' Meeting**

Thur, May 7, 5:00 to 6:00 pm MDT

Online

Hosted by AUSU

[www.ausu.org/event/2020-annual-members-meeting/](https://www.ausu.org/event/2020-annual-members-meeting/)

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

*All events are free unless otherwise noted.*



Health wise, spreading misinformation is dangerous as well. Misinformation can lead to the virus being passed on to those most at risk. Manipulated content disguised as health advice and guidelines, such as lemons and hot water, or Trump's unsubstantiated claims about drug treatment, which has led to death and drug shortages. According to Ramona Pringle, director of the Creative Innovation Studio at Ryerson University, "Anything that's health-related, the challenge online is that it's so emotional. It speaks to our primal instincts about survival that people panic; people have an emotional reaction to it."

Finally, from an ethical standpoint, spreading misinformation disregards our civic duties and responsibilities to our keep our communities safe for all. It is also disrespectful to those risking their lives to stop this pandemic, often out of economic necessity, as well as those are dying, those who may die, and those have already lost loved ones.

According to Tom Phillips, editor at Full Fact, this situation is too pressing "for a 'publish first, check later' approach." However, "[t]he good news is that we all, journalists and citizens alike, can take steps to slow the spread of misleading claims. By taking time to think before you share – about where a claim has come from, how you might check its contents, and how it makes you feel – we're less likely to inadvertently pass on bad information that puts our friends and family at an even greater risk."

The spread of misinformation, along with conspiracy theories, highlight the lack of and importance of critical thinking and media literacy skills, described as "the knowledge and skills necessary to understand and use the codes and conventions of a wide variety of media forms and genres appropriately, healthily, effectively and ethically."

Media literacy supports critical thinking skills, such as evaluating purpose and target audience, and conducting research, as well as becoming smart consumers of information and products. According to the Center for Media Literacy, helpful media literacy question to ask include, "1. Who created this message? 2. What creative techniques are used to attract my attention? 3. How might different people understand this message differently than me? 4. What values, lifestyles, and points of view are represented in, or omitted from, this message? 5. Why is this message being sent?"

In Canada, media literacy has been influenced by the work of Marshall McLuhan, as well as Barry Duncan, founder of the Association for Media Literacy (AML). AML strives to show Canadians how media works, how media are organized, and how media produce meaning. In addition, in 2017, the NewsWise literacy program was created to combat the spread of fake news in Canada. Aimed at elementary and high school students, NewsWise teaches how to filter and separate fake news, including checking for reliable sources of information. Fake news has come into prominence, since Trump's election, with his belittling of often credible and mainstream media, as "fake news," and subsequent spread on social media. Launched in 2018, the news literacy program now serves students Canada-wide from Grades 5 to 12, aiming "to provide school-aged Canadians an understanding of the role of journalism in a healthy democracy and the tools to find and filter information online."

Here at AU, students interested in media and communications are encouraged to consider the BPA Communication Studies Major Program, featuring courses, such as CMNS 202/POLI 291: Media and Power in Canadian Society and CMNS 402: Global Communication.

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## The Creative Spark

### Shakespeare's Guide to Dialogue

Marie Well



Okay, so Shakespeare didn't write this guide. Nor did Chekhov, Tolstoy, or Mama June. Didn't Mama June publish? Regardless, if any of them wrote what follows, they'd be beaming.

With that said, here is Shakespeare's guide to character dialogue:

#### Tip #1: Hey, have you tried cutting out words?

Cut out words, even if it hurts.

One playwriting professor of mine had many wonderful qualities but was vindictive to an extreme. And I was his target. He took my script, and no-one else's, and crossed out over 80% of my dialogue.

He showed my bad example to the class and sent me home with the edits. I felt like crying, but instead I studied it. From that day on, I wrote tighter dialogue.

Now, imagine your vilest enemy crosses off every unnecessary word on your page until you've got 1/5<sup>th</sup>

left. That's how tight your dialogue should be written.

Author Rayne Hall says, "Ruthlessly cut anything that doesn't drive the plot forward. Where real people use several to-and-fro exchanges, condense it to just one. The best candidates for cutting are greetings, courtesies, and ritualised small talk. In real life, they're polite and often crucial. In fiction, they're tedious ballast that puts readers off" (14%).

Here's an example of dialogue that goes from wordy to tight:

Wordy: 'I'm not sure I understand what you're saying, Mary. Let me get this right. Are you saying that you're leaving me?'

Tight: 'You're leaving me?'" (16%).

Cutting out words gives that warm feeling.

#### Tip #2: Did someone say, "More zingers, please?"

Zingers are the tightest of dialogue.

How do you make dialogue zing?

Author Rayne Hall answers, "Pick an existing dialogue line in which an important character says something impactful or provocative. Prune it. Shave off every word that's not absolutely necessary, until you're left with the bare essence. Replace dull words with short vivid ones. Now it zings" (17%).

If you can give that zinger a double meaning—or a twist—you've got a zinger jacked on steroids.

Here is an example:



Sharyn: “This bank heist will be easier to nail than a free beer.”

Warren: “Are you?”

Yes, zingers often arise in flirtatious banter, says author Rayne Hall (Dec. 2015).

Get more from your stories with zingers.

### **Tip #3: I'd walk a mile for personality.**

I saved the best for last. Here it is:

How do you give each character a unique personality? It's easy!

Just look at author Rayne Hall's system: “Think of each character's key personality traits. Define them in adjectives, for example, honest, sensitive, ambitious, greedy, pessimistic, resentful. I suggest five for the main protagonist, four for main characters, three for minor characters and two for walk-on roles. (Of course your characters are more complex than a five-word description, but for this technique, it's best to focus on the key traits)” (18%).

Consider reading *The Positive Trait Thesaurus* and *The Negative Trait Thesaurus*. Pick out traits for your characters from either book. Remember, villains aren't all bad, and heroes aren't all good.

I'm gentle, affectionate, loyal, nurturing, insecure, and oversensitive. If I started with the bad traits and said I was oversensitive, insecure, gentle, affectionate, nurturing, and loyal, you would've liked me less. (I read about that in a psychology book.) Keep order in mind when introducing your hero's and villain's personality. Start off with the hero's best to win over a reader; the villain's worst to make 'em bristle.

Here is the key to giving your character dialogue personality:

Rayne Hall says, “Whenever the character speaks, [let] her words reflect one of those [personality] traits, either in content (what she says) or in style (how she says it) ....”

Here are some examples of how the content can reflect the personality.

Resentful: ‘Without Mary's meddling, we would have won the award.’

Forgiving: ‘Mary wasn't up to the task, but she did her best’” (18%).

Me: “If I had been more encouraging toward Mary, we could've won. Next time, I'll help Mary strengthen her form.”

Obey your personality, at least when used as a character.

My thought? Your character change must replace at least one of those traits with an opposite—or at least a better substitute. If the character is jealous, turn her into a nurturer of her competitors. If a character is macho, turn him into a gentleman. If a character is addictive, turn her spiritual.

You see? Just plan events that increasingly block your hero's main desire from coming true. In turn, your hero is forced to change to keep—or gain—his or her dream. This works in real life, too. If one of your traits keep you from getting your dream, do the opposite (or find a positive substitute.) And so, even though Shakespeare wrote not a word of this, his guide is your safe place in this unsafe world.

### References

Hall, Rayne. (Dec. 2015). Writing Vivid Dialogue. E-book

## Porkpie Hat A Brand New Renaissance

Darjeeling Jones



I've always felt, haven't you, that springtime, especially in the midst of an apocalypse, is a wonderful opportunity to try something new. One world crumbles as another one rises. Perhaps we could skip that whole intermediate period of barbaric anarchy, though. Either way, I thought we might do a little revamping and refreshing.

For example, I think we could do with a new form of currency with which to measure our wealth. Walks in the park, pomegranates, feathers, and memories might be as good denominations as any. Or, comings and goings through magnificent doorways, seawater cupped in the palms of our hands, unexpected laughter. If it must be paper, let it be origami swans floating away down a river, or poems written upon vallum. If it has to be gold, let it be the sunlight that lazy dogs fall asleep in. If silver, let it be shafts of moonlight slanting through stained glass windows. Let's spend it all now, in one drunken binge. If we play our cards right, there's always more where that stuff came from.

While we are at it, how about a new way of reckoning the meaning of individual success. Instead of evaluating

it upon, in comparison to our peers, the number of real estate properties we own, the level of prestige our careers command, the degrees and possessions we've attained, or the checklist of braggable experiences we've managed to cross off our bucket lists, what if we gauged it by the degree to which our personal reservoirs of hope, curiosity, wonder, and love have stubbornly renewed themselves, refusing to be permanently depleted despite all the travails and vicissitudes that have inevitable been visited upon us?

As an added step, perhaps we could use this wild, anxiety-inducing epoch as an invitation to reconsider our priorities in countless other ways, including our responsibilities to ourselves, to others around us, to society, and to the planet itself. We've traveled quite a long road with our current consciousness, values, and approaches to life. I think many of us would agree that it's been a bit of a mixed bag, results-wise. We've had some shining moments, for sure. The Renaissance, for instance. We've produced some real treasures along the way, including hollandaise sauce, romantic poetry, space travel, and soul music, just to name a few.

Still, with global society lurching towards deepening levels of intolerance and upheaval, and our poor natural world teetering on the brink of complete exhaustion and collapse, there's no time like the present to begin to explore new ways. If we begin in time, there may be countless more adventures and rebirths awaiting our odd, inventive, often short-sighted species. On the other hand, if we keep just killing time, we may find out that time is immortal, but we are not. A perfect point in history, then, to reflect upon our past, and expand our vision of what the future could be. As my great grandfather used to say, "never let a perfectly good gotterdammerung go to waste." He was a hundred years old at the time, and completely crazy, but I think he made some sense. To paraphrase one of our own informal poet laureates, Gord Downie, bring on a brand new renaissance. I think I'm ready.

## The Study Dude

### How I Improved My Highlighting in Five Easy Steps

Marie Well



At university, I highlighted like a wild dog—entire pages soaked in yellow. I'd take my highlighted points, jot them down on cue cards, and memorize them all. Study time was gruelling.

Weirder still, I couldn't figure out how other students got A's taking two more classes than me each semester. But I showed them: After one day learning a step-by-step secret to highlighting, my study skills sped up and my retention skyrocketed. Now, I hope to share the secret with you in five easy steps and two simple rules. After all, every keener wants an easy edge.

#### **Easy step #1: Highlight one sentence per paragraph.**

According to The Open University, “A good rule of thumb is to underline or highlight one sentence per paragraph. Paragraphs usually focus on one key point, and while they might include an illustrative example which may be useful, it is the main point that you need to identify first and foremost” (38%).

Good writers aim for one key idea per paragraph. Hopefully, that's who wrote your textbook. So,

give the main idea in each paragraph a yellow glow.

Once, a prof assigned a textbook densely written to a first-year class I TA'd. The only sentences in the book worth highlighting were the ones that made sense on the first go. In hindsight, the book was poorly written: too many stuffy words that didn't add meaning. If you find yourself in this situation, simply highlight the clear key points and try to reword the rest in plain English. Highlighting key ideas keeps you on track.

#### **Easy step #2: Jot a note in the margin beside your highlighted text.**

The Open University says, “Some people find it more useful, then, to add in a short note of the example in the margin next to the highlighted sentence” (38%).

I love taking notes in the margins of books. If you do this, you'll be thankful come exam or essay writing time.

As an example, I bought a book on advertising slogans. I jotted down any useful tips in the margin. Later, when I had a job assignment to create ads, I opened the tome to find all the useful stuff waiting for me in the margins. No need for me to reread the entire book.

Also jot down any questions you have in the margins. Perhaps use a red pen for any questions so you can skip over them when time-crunched. Otherwise, you've always got time for margin notes.



**Easy step #3: Think about what you read (and take notes).**

The Open University advises, “The next stage ... is to begin to take the ideas into your thoughts, make your own sense of them, and begin to ‘talk to’ what you are reading: check you understand the main points; see how they relate to your own experience; think up other examples that may illustrate them; see how they stand up to questioning; and sometimes query them or begin to put forward criticisms. This is about reading and thinking” (44%).

To do all this, I suggest you type up the highlighted sentence and margin notes (from step #1 and #2). Then type up your own examples, comments, questions, and criticisms. Include a full reference to the textbook and page number. You'll reinforce the material, which means—yes!—better grades. Studies go better with note-taking.

**Easy step #4: Organize your notes (and add comments and questions).**

The Open University says, “Another way of processing ideas is to reorganize notes around a set of questions or thematic headings. This is particularly useful for those notes that you will be drawing upon for planning and writing assignments” (46%).

This is the best idea for essay-writing ever. I like to write down a one- to two-word theme beside every point I highlight in articles. That way, when it comes to writing papers, I can easily organize the themes into three key ideas (which then form the basis of a thesis statement).

A similar system is to put all your highlighted points on cue cards (along with citations). In one sitting, write a one- or two-word theme on the back of each cue card. The shorter the themes, the better. Then simply organize your cue cards into piles—a pile for each theme. Your papers will write themselves, and your grades will go up. So, fill up your study-tank with themes.

**Easy step #5: Reread your notes (and add more comments and questions).**

According to The Open University, “The technique of re-reading completed notes and supplementing them with comments and queries is a useful way of processing ideas” (46%).

Rereading your notes is great. Memorizing them is better, but, again, if you bulk up your notes with comments and queries, use a different color pen or circle them. That way, you can skip over the comments and questions come exam time.

But check out this other system: one author said to keep condensing your notes in stages. His aim was to tighten the notes so that they'd be easier to study from. I never tried his system, but if I did, I'd keep all past revisions as a hedge.

Which system should you choose? Try them both. See which one gets you the best grades with the least strain.

**Easy step #6 (optional): Discuss what you learned using a blog, YouTube channel, forum, friend, or Meetup Group.**

The Open University recommends, “Look for opportunities to discuss key ideas with someone else - either a fellow student or someone outside of the ... University who is interested in contemporary social science debates. This can provide a helpful stimulus to internalizing them” (57%).

This is the fun part. Go wild discussing with others what you learn. I watch a fine art student's YouTube clips on writing, and I love them. If you share what you learn, you'll do others a favor while bettering your grasp of the material.

And if you share online, who knows, with enough followers, you could monetize your study notes. Learn the spirit of earning money from your studies.

Now for two simple rules to streamline your studies:

### **Simple rule #1: Rely on shorthand.**

“One way of both cutting down the time spent making notes and keeping them to an appropriate length is to make use of symbols, shorthand and abbreviations” (41%).

By using math symbols like “+” for “and” or “-” for “less,” you can speed up note-taking. “B/C” is often used for “because,” and “W/O” is often used for “without.” You could make up your own shorthand. Stick to your shorthand system, and you’ll take notes in a flash.

### **Simple rule #2: Use your own words.**

“It is not until you start to make your own notes, in your own words ... that you can really check that you understand ideas enough to work with and use them, particularly in preparation for assignments and exams” (41%).

Use this simple five-step system to master your studies. When your friends ask, “Were you born a genius?” just don’t let on, “It’s my highlighter.”

#### *References*

Open Learn: Free Learning from The Open University. (2016). . *Reading and note taking – preparation for study*. The Open University. E-book excerpt.

## **Council Connection April 16, 2020 Meeting**

**Natalia Iwanek**




The most recent AUSU Council Meeting took place on Thursday, April 16, 2020 from 6:30 to 8:30 pm MT.

All Councillors were in attendance, with the exception of Councillor Melinda Goertz, as well as incoming council observing. Also in attendance was *The Voice's* Managing Editor Karl Low and Council Meeting Reporter Natalia Iwanek.

Key items included COVID-19, Council Reports, and the incoming Councillor Oaths.

### **Agenda and Minutes**

President Brandon Simmons called the meeting to order at 6:32 pm MT. The agenda and all minutes were accepted without issue. 

### **Action Items**

Brandon continued with a Review of Action Items, of which none were outstanding.

---

## New Business

No policies were discussed this meeting, with all new business being discussion items.

VPEX Natasha Donahue experienced technical difficulties during her Podcast Report, to which it was noted that many people have been having this issue due to increased bandwidth usage amidst COVID-19. Natasha discussed AUSU's podcast year in review, stating, "by far, all of our episodes are successful," however, the most successful "feature students." She noted similar listenership for all episodes but those featuring students, which often attracted double the numbers. According to the report, the most popular episodes were "A Great Chat with AU Students," "AUSU's 27 Birthday and Summer Study Tips," and "Our President is Going to Ottawa."

Natasha thanked Executive Director Jodi Campbell for being a great host and engaging on-air personality. She also felt that a great deal had been learned about sound engineering, mixing, and advertising potentials. Although there have been challenges and success, she felt that the key is remaining open minded and innovative, noting that podcasts require ongoing attention. The podcast is now a permanent fixture on the AUSU website, and has been a successful and low-cost way to "contribute to the student community, while allowing AUSU to give a voice to the organization in a dynamic way." Natasha noted that, in a way, the podcast functions as a type of institutional memory. Brandon added that while overall listens may have been low, the podcast serves a niche in AUSU communications and had a very low initial cost. Students can access the podcast through [AUSU's website](#), or by searching "AUSU Podcast" on Spotify, Apple Podcasts, Google Podcasts, and Pocket Casts.

Natasha continued with the Provincial Advocacy Report where AUSU examined their strategy for advocacy at the provincial level, stating AUSU had looked into two provincial advocacy groups, ASEC and CAUS, but has decided to "pursue our own independent advocacy initiative." On a federal level AUSU decided to continue membership with CASA. In addition, AUSU has been working with other advocacy groups and emphasizing AU students' needs in documents where possible.

Natasha felt confident that AUSU is being recognized as a representative of Albertan students with the government. However, no advocacy week took place this year as a result of the timing of the new education budget and COVID-19. The report also details future plans, including collaboration with other student leaders in other provinces, which may be a way to approach other provincial governments about AU students residing in their provinces.

Councillor Darcie Fleming felt that Brandon and Natasha both did a great job.

Brandon added that the Minister (of Advanced Education) is "now starting to come to us" and has emailed stating that he wants to meet the incoming executives. This will allow AUSU the opportunity to speak about loan limits for AU students, who do not typically fall into the traditional student category, namely single, young adults living in residence. He felt confident that Natasha and Stacey will do a good job.

Next, Executive Director Jodi Campbell provided an overview of Council's response to COVID-19, mentioning that the "last six weeks have been pretty crazy." He stated that students now have different needs and asked, "How do we need to adapt what we're doing to make sure that those needs are still being met for the student membership?" AUSU's priority is to "become a support network for students," as well as a strong resource, providing information, directing students to the correct spots on the AU website, and taking student concerns to stakeholders. He



acknowledged the great job AU has done in updating their website, as well as their FAQ page. For students requiring more information, contact [covid@athabascau.ca](mailto:covid@athabascau.ca).

Jodi continued that AUSU had begun to identify where the gaps were, and which student scenarios were not being addressed. In addition, he stated, “mental health is not going away during COVID-19,” which is why AUSU will continue to promote Homewood Health to ensure that students are taken care of. “These are unprecedented times,” that could not have been predicted six weeks ago. “We will continue to adapt to the ever changing needs of students.”

Brandon stated that even though AU is online, some students are having difficulties. ProctorU is not cheap, there may be problems with computer hardware compliance, as well as the difficulties for students with children and families. AUSU is working closely with AU, including the AU higher executives to highlight student concerns and mitigate the issues. This includes a push for more options for alternative assessments, including course extensions. However, AUSU also looking at funding and possibly changes to AUSU’s emergency bursary.

Councillor Lisa Oracheski stated that the rates of sexual and domestic violence typically go up during disasters, as abusers and those abused are in the same place during isolation. She believed that this is important to bring up to AU, even when we return “to quote unquote normal.” Josh concurred, stating that domestic violence rates were indeed up according to a friend in the Montreal police force.

Councillor Darcie Fleming wondered about Homewood Health’s services during the past year, to which Brandon replied that AUSU had not been “wowed,” believing that it would be a much better service.

Jodi also remarked on the sudden popularity of ProctorU in North America and the world. Coincidentally, AUSU had already been planning a free code giveaway, so the timing was perfect. The response was amazing and AUSU was able to increase the giveaways from 50 to 80, which resulted in great feedback from the students.

Sarah remarked on seeing some negativity regarding ProctorU on social media and questioned if there had been any negative feedback for turnaround times. Jodi replied that although ProctorU had originally communicated that they were prepared, they had gotten overwhelmed as time progressed. Jodi plans to bring up the issue on an upcoming call. Sarah stated that there had been lags during exams, and Brandon noted that ProctorU has been known to have some of these challenges during good times, even before the present bandwidth and usage increases. AUSU is continuing to work with the university and ProctorU to see how more resources can be brought online.

Councillor Monique Durette noted that often those with children at home cannot wait to write their exams. Brandon concurred that in a normal situation ProctorU works well, but now is not normal. In addition, some students are uncomfortable on ProctorU, so they are working to ensure that alternative assessment options are available. From what AUSU has heard, students who have reached out do get arrangements if needed.

Councillor Katy Lowe inquired if AU will pay ProctorU fees, as this is a brand new expense for students. Brandon replied that it is being looked at on a case-by-case basis, but there is hesitation from AU because of costs. They are opening up other opportunities for now, including allowing first responders to put their classes on hold, instead of formally withdrawing.

Katy wondered if the province was on board, especially since provincial student funding may not understand this type of withdrawal/extension. Brandon revealed that the Alberta government has stated that funding will continue even if a student withdraws or fails. Extensions are not likely to affect funding as long as extensions do not bring students over their total course allowance. AUSU is starting to have this conversation with other provinces as well.

Darcie inquired about CASA's reaction to this on a federal level, to which Brandon replied that CASA has been having conversations and meetings, although no public campaigns, to get payment and interest relief for students, as well as expanding CERB to students. He stated that "more will be coming publicly in the next little bit."

## Reports

Brandon, in his President's Report, stated that this was a very busy month, even before the onset of COVID-19. AU put forward a balanced budget based on cuts. Although it was advertised as a balanced budget, theoretically it could be a \$2.4M surplus at the end of the year. In addition, AU has recently benefitted from increased enrollment; they must ensure to price themselves in a way not to jeopardize enrollment.

Brandon mentioned the recent resignations of VPFA Brittany Daigle from current and upcoming Council, as well as Councillors Amanda Lipinski and Jasmine Hernandez from upcoming Council.

Next, Natasha left the VPEX Report as written and thanked outgoing Council. One highlight from the report included the March 26 Board of Governors e-meeting, which approved the budget.

In the absence of Brittany, Brandon presented the VPFA Report to which there were no questions. The report detailed VPFA's Brittany Daigle's March 20 resignation and adjustments to roles. He stated that they were able to respond to the resignation easily as most tasks had already been completed and were ready to hand over to incoming Council.

Jodi presented the Finance Committee Report, describing working toward Quarter 2, mentioning that with the VPFA's resignation requirements were handled by Brandon.

Sarah was elected as Award Committee Chair to the end of the term as a result of the resignation as well. A chair is necessary, as the Awards Committee is an ongoing process and has some awards that require quick response by the chair.

Natasha's Member Engagement and Communication Committee Report revealed that her many plans, including showcasing the campus and science facilities, were cancelled due to COVID-19. Instead, MEC made YouTube videos outlining COVID-19 resources.

Jodie then presented the Executive Director's Report, thanking Sarah for stepping up and leaving most of his report as presented. He provided an update on the course evaluations, revealing some problems with the web developer, but stating that the soft launch will probably occur in a few weeks. Jodie also thanked those who are leaving, stating that they had "done some great work over the last two years." He welcomed the new Councillors, especially Monique and Stacey who have been job shadowing and getting to know their roles and responsibilities.

Communications and Member Services Coordinator Donette Kingyens presented her Report, stating that it was interesting to see how AUSU has grown. The last newsletter, which highlighted COVID-19 had a 44% open rate, about double the normal numbers.

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## Council Changeover

At this point, the outgoing Council was dissolved, the motion carrying unanimously, with a move by Josh and second by Christine. The Councillors-elect then all took the Councillor Oath simultaneously, including AUSU's new executives: President Natasha Donahue, VPEx Stacey Hutchings, and VPFA Monique Durette. Having 10 people attempt to read an oath simultaneously over the phone was an interesting experience.

There were then a number of motions to fill the now vacant spots on AUSU's various committees.

The Finance Committee motion passed unanimously, with a move by Councillor Katy Lowe and a second by Monique. The new Committee consists of Monique Durette as chair and Darcie Fleming, Regan Johnson, Ian Stewart, and Josh Ryan as voting members.

The Awards Committee passed unanimously with a move by Josh and a second by Darcie. Katy Lowe, Katheryn Hadden, Monique Durette, Regan Johnson, and Devon Romanick as voting members.

The MEC Committee had a great deal of interest and was put to a vote after prospective members' speeches. Darcie stated she would like to be involved as this would be a new committee for her. She felt that she could add a great deal as a result of her previous position on the Finance Committee. Ian thanked Darcie for going first and feels that the committee is a great opportunity for innovation. Josh stated that he has been part of MEC for the past two years and enjoyed helping with the podcast. He feels that he can build on this experience, as well as his part-time job in communicating and engagement with the armed forces. Katy stated that one of the main reasons she joined Council was the opportunity to engage with the students and showcase the Council. "I have a lot of really big ideas," she stated. Regan would like to get students more engaged. She does not find AU very inclusive and has many ideas to include Indigenous and LGBTQ students.

After some confusion regarding the actual number of seats available, the ballot prepared by Governance and Advocacy Coordinator Duncan Wojtaszek, was put to a vote. All Councillors voted, with the exception of Kathryn who left the meeting. Josh received nine votes, Ian eight, Katy seven, Darcie six, and Regan five, with Regan not elected.

## Question and Answer Period

The Question and Answer period began with a question by *The Voice's* Managing Editor Karl Low, who inquired about the possibility of by-elections, due to the three Councillors leaving as the new Council started. Natasha replied that AUSU will wait a few more months, in case of future resignations. She also mentioned the possibility of looking into existing policies, so as to give those who run in the election an opportunity to join in the case of early resignations.

## Next Meeting and Adjournment

The meeting concluded with Jodi applauding the work done by Brandon, as well as best wishes and thanks from Natasha and Donette. The meeting was officially adjourned at 8:24 pm MT. The next meeting will tentatively take place on May 21, 2020 at 6:30 pm MT. As AUSU members, AU students are encouraged to attend council meetings via teleconference. Details can be found on the [AUSU website](#).



## Fly on the Wall

### May Day! M'Aider!---AU Can Mean Anything on Any Day!

Jason Sullivan



The year was 1986. Kindergarten. A larval *Fly on the Wall* refused to sing or perform the actions of the classic kiddie tune “If You’re Happy and You Know It.” He was told to go sit in a chair in the corner. What a pretentious kid, or was he precocious? Maybe he was channelling his inner Reagan and sensed that the song originated in a 1937 Soviet musical. He felt like a lemming or a bison being herded over a cliff of conformity. Only years later did he realize that within every act of collective solidarity there lies the implications of joy, rambunctiousness, and uninhibited fun in addition to the potential for violence, both social and physical. Whenever

congregation occurs the consequences are real for all who resist.

He’d seen firsthand the shame and embarrassment of the teacher handing out ‘birthday bumps’ to the kids as their number came up on the calendar. Asking, and receiving, in advance a reprieve from the discomfiture of bumps he realized that to every rule there is an exception. But when song time rolled around everyone participated; were but naptime so un-punctuated with rebellious acts! He noticed how music lent an air of brainwash to the classroom. And then there were the lyrics. Just consider how quickly being happy and clapping one’s hands is transformed, a few bars later, into the more dire demand that if you’re happy and you know it you must stomp your feet. Happy hands, jazz hands or otherwise, convey vastly differently emotional textures than does a foot stomp. Boots on the ground, that’s what the song demanded. And whenever the general will of a group of people are concerned, what Jean-Jacques Rousseau termed the *volonte generale*, there’s potential for mass hysteria, public lynchings and witch huntery. Or at least a sense of being a pariah for not participating.

Take May Day, or, to sort its origins, a cry for help in French: M’aider! In Medieval times spring was serious business for anyone seeking to grow dinner for another year. As such, the First of May had been a calendar festival celebrating the joys of spring for thousands of years. It began as a pagan celebration and survived cultural evolution by shifting its meaning and content. What bound May Day together over time was collective participation regardless of the specific means of production. The imperial Romans, for instance, held an annual five day celebration of floral emergence known as Floralia. And for early May the earthier Celts used the more guttural name of Beltane.

Key to this holiday everywhere came to be the symbolic May Pole, around which numerous coloured ribbons were wrapped as dancing participants circled the wagons of spring. One considers here the unity of multiplicity whereby many become one, and stronger. Bound together by their participation in the act of walking in circles, medieval people ennobled the Maypole as a rite of spring. Its origins remind one of a key symbol in Roman times: the fascii. This was a bundle of wooden rods that, lashed together with an axe affixed to one end, symbolized jurisprudence and authority and the just bearing of laws. The law of the many goes back, way back.

So one might say that wherever groups abide, no matter the occasion or general tenor of the proceedings, there’s the potential for fascist behavior if we consider that the rules of social engagement are what combine to form an event. Classrooms are ripe for this rampant growth of

authoritarianism because, after all, no one wants to be picked on as a member of a performative minority group. Happily, AU minimizes these challenges: no classroom means no enforced conformity, although we do have to abide the rules of scholarship and grammar as well as demonstrating fidelity to the learning objectives of a course syllabus.

Yet overt discursive oppression is a small part of what can make brick and mortar colleges stultifying; social norms and values and their external and coercive essences often obscure perfectly noble themes and meanings. In short: where people abide textbooks and countervailing viewpoints are sometimes both silenced, or their words reduced to a mute, mouse-like murmur. When some truths seem unassailable or self-evident, and especially when such truths become clear because the teacher has spelled them out in dripping, sardonic tones, they tend toward not only law but gospel. Exasperation with educators preaching to the choir is a big reason why so many great minds take flight from school in the first place.

Fortunately, we at AU can tease out truth for ourselves from the course material on offer; our tutors guide us loosely and give us free rein to learn directly from the horse's textual mouth. Freed from social pressures of classroom dynamics we can really sink our teeth into the material and draw our own conclusions. After all, we aren't back in school as adults to brown nose, grade grub, or major in ass-kissing. The so-called real world has enough of that already! Nope, we're here at AU to learn and above all to learn to think critically, creatively and dynamically. So next week let's consider a modern incarnation of the pagan ritual of spring-adoration.

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



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

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

#### **AthaU Facebook Group**



Mel is curious about the ten-day rule for exams; other students confirm that an exam can be written up to ten days past the date scheduled with AU. Jonathon delayed booking an exam time with ProctorU and now there's no slots available by April 30; ten-day rule to the rescue (but responders strongly suggest students book with ProctorU at the same time as placing an exam request with AU.)

Other posts include ProctorU how-to, length of time to complete courses, Shakespeare, and courses BIOL 325, MKTG 406, and ORGB 364.

#### **Twitter**

@AthabascaU tweets: "Although #AthabascaU is an online university, we know many of our learners have been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. Join us for a free webinar this Friday to learn about the ways your university can support you! [t.co/klIRf4I6JF](https://t.co/klIRf4I6JF)."

@austudentsunion tweets: "Pick up new skills from the comfort of home! AUSU provides all #AthabascaU undergrad students with FREE access to LinkedIn Learning, with thousands of video training courses taught by industry experts. Start learning today! <https://ausu.org/services/learning/>. #igo2AU."

#### **Youtube**

The Back to School Again podcast series begins with Episode One: The future of learning with Dr. Neil Fassina.

## Homemade is Better

### Pico de Gallo & Guacamole

**Chef Corey**



Merry May readers, may the 4th be with you, happy Cinco De Mayo, and watch out for revenge of the 6th! Some Star Wars humour for you there as I am, after all, a dad, and need to get the occasional dad joke in. For this week, I had planned on writing about the sourdough starter and sourdough pretzels, but I decided to abandon it for some festive Cinco De Mayo recipes. I'll give you a double-header this week because these recipes complement each other so well!

A pre-recipe pointer. A lot of recipes call for terms like dice, julienne, or slice. So how do you do that? Youtube is an excellent source for learning knife skills. But I teach my kids (ages 10, 10, and 6) how to use the proper tool for the job. When dicing, which means cutting into cube shapes, you want the sharpest knife possible. Cut your tomato in half from tip to stem or visa versa, then place the cut end on a cutting board and slice the tomato horizontally about 90% of the way through, leave the stem end intact.



Now make vertical slices from left to the right across the tomato.





To get your dice cut from the bottom tip of the tomato to the stem). Most other things that need dicing work similarly, some you will modify, others will be the same.

### Pico De Gallo

#### Ingredients

- 3 Roma tomatoes
- 1½ jalapenos
- ½ a red onion
- A handful of cilantro
- 1 tsp ground cumin
- 2 tsp lime juice
- 1 tsp of your favourite Tequila (optional)
- 1 tsp kosher salt
- 1 tsp pepper

#### Directions

1. Dice your tomatoes and onion very small and put them into a mixing bowl.
2. Add ½ a tsp of salt.
3. Put on rubber gloves for the jalapenos or be sure to wash your hands a lot after working with them. Getting jalapeno in your eyes is not fun, trust me.
4. Slice the stem end of the jalapeno off and remove the seeds. Slice the pepper lengthwise into thin strips then dice. Put into the bowl.
5. Grab your handful of cilantro and chop it as much as you feel like. It should be close in shape. Put it in the bowl.
6. Mix your Tequila and lime juice and add it to the mix.
7. Add in the cumin, the remaining salt and pepper.
8. Mix it all up and taste it! It'll be better in 24 hours—if it lasts that long.



### Guacamole

#### Ingredients

- 3 ripe avocados - diced
- 2 Roma tomatoes - diced
- ½ a jalapeno – diced
- 2 cloves of garlic - diced
- 2 tsp lime juice
- 2 tsp olive oil
- A handful of cilantro – roughly chopped
- ½ red onion - diced
- 2 tsp ground cumin
- 2 tsp kosher salt
- 1 oz Tequila

#### Directions

You have 2 options here.

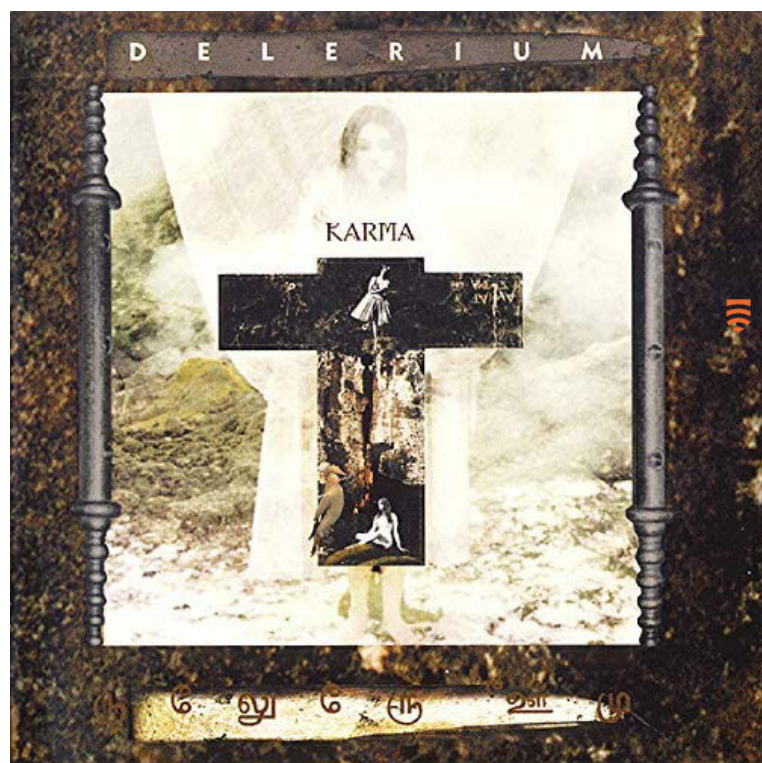
1. Option 1: You can make it chunky in which case you dice the avocado, tomato, jalapeno, garlic and onion. Roughly chop the cilantro then add everything else except the Tequila to a mixing bowl and mix. Taste it, then add more of any ingredient you think it needs.

2. Option 2: Add all the ingredients except the Tequila to a food processor and pulse it about 5 – 7 times. Even though you are using the food processor, you will still need to chop up everything, just not as finely. If you add it all whole, the guac will not mix properly, and then you are left with chunks of tomato or avocado or whole garlic.

3. You may be wondering when you use the Tequila. That's the celebratory reward for making these yourself! Take that shot and enjoy your salsa and guac with your favourite Taco Tuesday meal or nacho chips!

## Beats from the Basement Delerium

Milica Markovic



**Album:** *Karma*

**Artist:** Delerium

Considering the countless number of festivals worldwide dedicated solely to electronic music, I think it's safe to say many of us are fans of the genre. However, after listening to Vancouver-based duo Delerium's *Karma*, I feel that current artists generally don't push the envelope in terms of how audiences can engage with electronic dance music, instead focusing on those usual four beats per minute to get the crowd hopping.

Before transitioning further into dark ambient music, Delerium did something cool in 1997: combine electronic production and organic sounds (to the point where they overshadow the former) for a truly out-of-body experience. Gregorian chants were recorded specifically for the album, while

samples appear to have been taken of vocal styles as well as instruments prominent in various African, Middle Eastern, Asian, and European musical cultures respectively, including the tabla, Chinese zither, marimba, duduk, raita, Spanish guitar, snare drum, erhu, pipa, and bamboo flute.

This all manages to create both an astral and earthly atmosphere; we don't often hear it in Western music; music that mostly scratches the surface, if anything. I do hesitate to call *Karma* an ambient album though, because each song has a clear structure and rhythm to it. Moreover, they tend to rely on similar beats instead of fully experimenting with other melodies played in these unique genres.

Still, there's enough mystery here that encourages you to discover the music's origins, because you don't always know what you're listening to, and the rabbit hole can be quite a thrill. The lyrics, where applicable, convey poetic simplicity and can be interpretive at times. That works because they fade into the background, allowing for a more immersive experience with the music itself.

Several guests were brought on to sing the lyrics; in “Duende”, Camille Henderson—also from Vancouver—recites a despair-filled song about counting on peace in an imaginary world rather than reality. Her voice blends what sounds like a vocoder effect and her own ethereal pitch, matching the words’ distortive nature, with pygmy music to give it a sense of urgency.

Meanwhile, I find Delerium’s most famous hit, “Silence”, to be underwhelming given the talent behind it. Halifax-born Sarah McLachlan is arguably one of the best mezzo-sopranos out there, and although she sings this song about rejuvenation with warmth and somewhat of a dreamlike air, it isn’t among her strongest works. I nevertheless enjoy the chanting here, which sounds especially Byzantine.

On the other hand, Jacqui Hunt succeeds in bringing that psychedelic edge to “Euphoria”, the only song on *Karma* I’d say is close to pop. She reminds me of Madonna from the 90s onwards, who is also known for songs about starting over and believing in love, so it’s fitting that she took on one such track here. The echoes are also a highlight, as they still have me wondering whether they’re by humans or animals.

By far, the most enigmatic of them all to me is “Heaven’s Earth”. It is a hypnotically wicked piece in which yet another artist originating in Vancouver, Kristy Thirsk, tries to convince her love interest, who reciprocates her feelings, to be with her. The drama and precarious whispers in her voice that’s reminiscent of Kate Bush’s theatrics arrest me, but I’m not sure how to feel about the inclusion of lyrics in the first place. Do they cause the song to be jarringly uneven, or add to its evocative character?

These are the sort of things that demand your attention, particularly if you’re looking to adopt a more meditative outlook on life. On the whole, *Karma* is a new-age, worldbeat marvel that’d make a fine addition to any yogi’s collection.

*Milica Markovic is a Toronto AU student enrolled in the MA-IS program with a BA in criminology and political science.*

## Scholarship of the Week

Digging up scholarship treasure for AU students.

**Scholarship name:** Peter Elzinga Family Foundation Scholarships

**Sponsored by:** The Peter Elzinga Family Foundation

**Deadline:** June 1, 2020

**Potential payout:** up to \$2000

**Eligibility restriction:** Applicants must be residents of Alberta and continuing or planning to continue to further their education or upgrade their skills. See [application form](#) for full eligibility criteria.

**What's required:** A completed application form, including financial and academic information, and a description of the applicant's community involvement, a letter stating why you're applying for the scholarship, and three letters for reference.

**Tips:** Preference is given to applicants who can demonstrate financial need.

**Where to get info:** [www.peterelzinga.com/scholarships](http://www.peterelzinga.com/scholarships)







## Testing Toxicity

*Dear Barb:*

*I'm in a dilemma. I have a family member who I believe is toxic and I am considering whether I should cut them out of my life. I don't want to say who they are, but they are part of my immediate family. This isn't too much of an issue right now because I don't have to see them with the social distancing, but I know that eventually I will see them again.*

*I always feel put down and belittled when I am around this person. They seem to want to control every situation. I feel so much anxiety when I know I have to get together with this person. Whatever I do is not right in their eyes, they constantly criticize me. I have spoken to other family members about this person to see if they feel as I do, or if it's just me over reacting. A couple of my siblings said they notice that I am being unfairly treated by this person, but they have never felt this personally. Even when this person has been rude and I call them out, they won't apologize. I just don't know what to do, I feel if I cut this person out of my life it will divide our family and I don't want that to happen. I feel like I'm between a rock and a hard place. Do you have any suggestions you could share?*

*Thanks, Roxanne.*

Hi Roxanne:

Cutting an immediate family member out of your life is a serious and life altering thing to do. It will change you and the other person and the dynamics within your family. Therefore, you realize you have to be 100% sure that you are making the right decision. Perhaps while you have this time away from this person, you could compose a letter to them, explaining how they make you feel. Don't mention anything about cutting them out of your life. In the letter you could suggest that you both go to counseling to try to come to a better understanding of each other. It is possible that they do not realize what they are doing or how their actions make you feel.

Before you make any decisions, see what the response to your letter will be. If they are apologetic and did not realize they were making you feel this way, then you may be able to forage a new and better relationship. If they are defensive and refuse to acknowledge what they doing, but are willing to go to counseling, you have a chance of resolving this. If they flatly deny their part in this and blame it all on you, then you will have to consider putting some distance between you and them. Perhaps a little bit of time apart will help defuse the relationship. My advice is not to make a rash decision that you may have to live with for the rest of your life.

I hope I was helpful, and thanks for your letter, Roxanne.

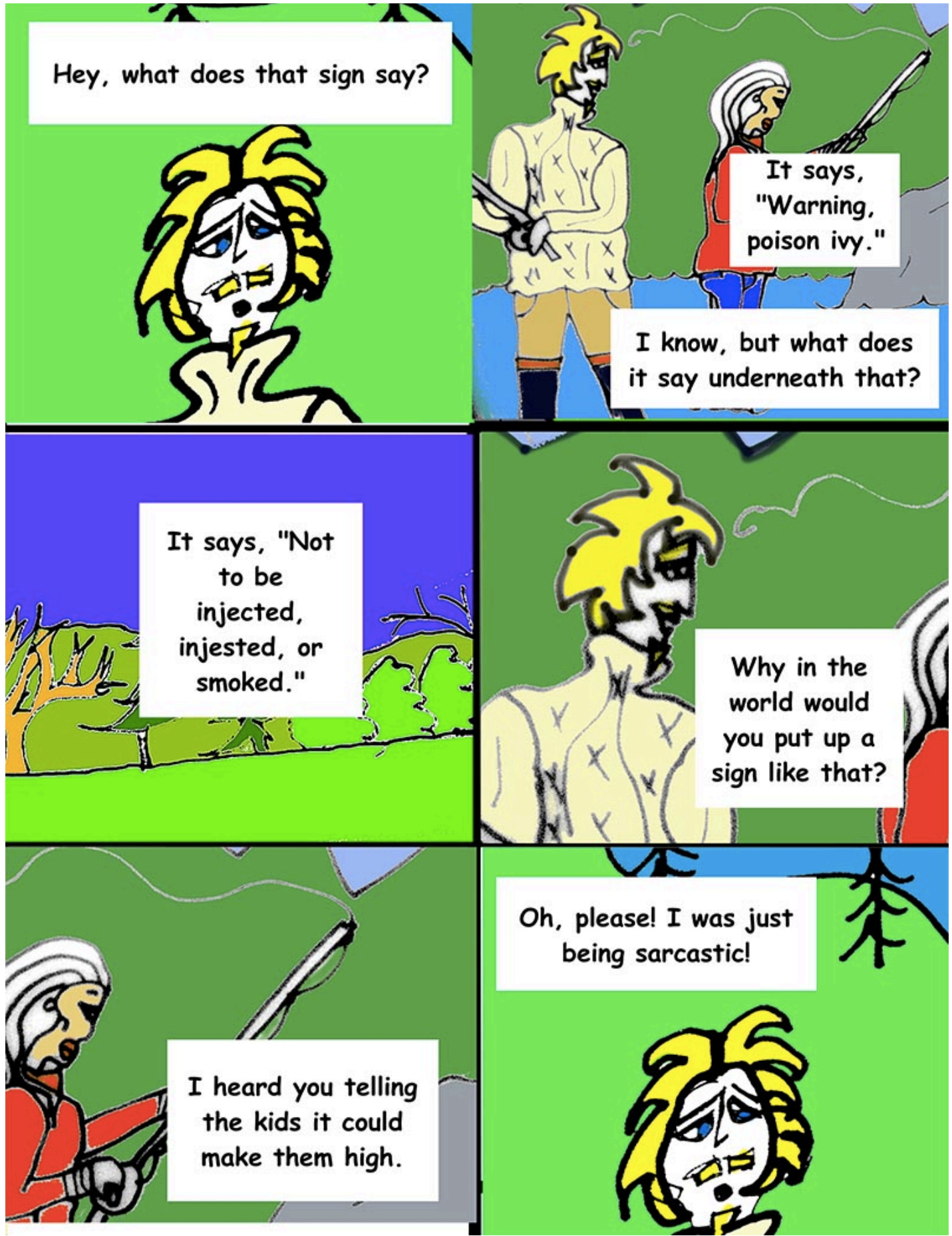
*Email your questions to [voice@voicemagazine.org](mailto:voice@voicemagazine.org). Some submissions may be edited for length or to protect confidentiality; your real name and location will never be printed. This column is for entertainment only. The author is not a professional counsellor and this column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





Poet Maeve  
I Was Being Sarcastic

Wanda Waterman



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

## IMPORTANT DATES

- **May 7:** [AUSU Annual General Meeting](#)
- **May 10:** [Deadline to register in a course starting Jun 1](#)
- **May 15:** [Jun degree requirements deadline](#)
- **May 20:** [AUSU Public Council Meeting](#)
- **May 30:** [Deadline to apply for course extension for June](#)
- **Jun 10:** [Deadline to register in a course starting Jul 1](#)

## Apply to Join our Finance Committee!

Want to earn money and gain experience for a career in finance or leadership?

Want to get more involved with your AU Students' Union?

### Apply to be a voting member of the AUSU Finance Committee!

The finance committee is a standing committee formed by AUSU council to provide oversight on AUSU's financial transactions, ensure compliance with policy, highlight errors or inconsistencies for review, and to offer recommendations to council on the financial direction of the organization.

The committee also has the authority to recommend changes to AUSU financial policies, approve spending outside of budget as specified policy, and recommend the appointment of the auditor and investment advisor.

[Click here](#) for more info about the Finance committee.

**You can apply no matter where you live – meetings are by teleconference and committee work is done online! Must be an AUSU member to apply.**

Committee members should be prepared to devote approximately one hour per quarter (every 3 months) for email and committee related business. They should also be prepared to attend one teleconference meeting (approx 1 hour) per quarter as well as one additional teleconference meeting in July for development of the AUSU budget.

**The deadline to apply is Friday, May 8 at 4pm MT.**

**Click [here](#) for more info and to apply!**



## AUSU Annual Members' Meeting

AUSU is holding its [Annual Members' Meeting on Thursday, May 7, 2020](#), in accordance with AUSU [bylaws](#).

**All members are welcome to attend by phone or video conference.**

This is a great opportunity to find out more about your AU Students' Union and ask questions or provide feedback!

AUSU will also present the AUSU annual report and any bylaw changes since the last Annual meeting.

**Find out more on our website [here](#).**

### Annual Members' Meeting May 7, 2020 by Video Conference



## COVID-19 Updates for Students

For updates related to COVID-19 and related impacts to your Athabasca University studies, please visit the AU website:

- [COVID-19 General Info from Athabasca University](#)
- [COVID-19 Common Questions & Answers for students](#)

**For info on other support for students, click [here](#).**

To reach the AU Students' Union, email [admin@ausu.org](mailto:admin@ausu.org).



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