



THE VOICE

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ProctorU

The Highs & Lows of Online Invigilation

The Struggling Student Rants

Home: An Asset or Liability

Fly on the Wall

The Meaning of a Pause

Plus:

COVID-19: A Poem

Dear Barb: Selfish Concerns

and much more!



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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR



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

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

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

Editorial

Steps Need to be Taken

Karl Low



My apologies to everyone for the lateness of this. It's entirely my own fault, but I've been entirely drawn in by the reports of the violence and riots, and the causes of them, down in Minnesota and Kentucky for the past couple of days. I've been having difficulty wrapping my head around the events. Not around the riots or the violence, those I understand all too well.

The difficulty, for me, is understanding the racism and violence that the black community in Minnesota, in Kentucky, in many US states, have been suffering for years. You try to ask yourself how does this happen? How does one group of people view another as so inherently inferior simply because of skin colour or country of origin?

Of course, you like to think to yourself, thank goodness that isn't happening here, but then you have to look around and see things such as the treatment of indigenous peoples in Canada, leading to such things as the Truth and Reconciliation Committee. And then you remember that the residential

school system that many indigenous peoples were forced into, with all the horrors that were inflicted within, were still operating as recently as 1996. Not even 30 years ago.

Then you look at recent hate crimes, graffiti, insults, thrown against people from other cultures, not years ago, but recently. And you start to realize that all of this stuff you have such trouble understanding why other people do it, are still around. We may be better in scale, we are not better in quality.

I don't condone the riots. I don't condone the violence. But at the same time, I understand it. When these people who feel this oppression, have felt it for years, have been trying for years to get it addressed, when they see it remains so ingrained, so *accepted* that an officer of the very system that is supposed to protect them has absolutely no concerns with injuring or even causing the death of a man who was unable to resist, even though it was being recorded on video, when it comes crashing down on you the level of confidence the authorities feel in doing that behavior, I can understand why violence seems as the only response left that might have a hope of causing change.

And that needs to be a warning to us. It's not enough for us to say we dislike racism and would never do it ourselves. We need to be on the lookout for it here in Canada, in our own communities, and call it out when we see it, condemn it when we see it. We must never reach that level of acceptance of it that was shown in Minnesota.

What's more, we need to demand more of our media, demand that they report on these incidents more, remind us more often of these things that are going on and not simply accept them as how things are. That's why I'm glad that AUSU has started the Ad Hoc Indigenous Representation Committee, as you can read about in the most recent Council Connection. It's a step. It's a step more than many other schools and students' associations have taken. And it's a step needed to be taken. 1996. Enjoy the read.

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

ProctorU

The Recent Highs & Lows of Online Invigilation

Natalia Iwanek



While many brick and mortar students and educators have struggled with the recent unexpected transition to online education, the very nature of AU's unique educational model has allowed the institution to bypass many issues. Although many aspects of life and work have been significantly altered for AU staff, faculty, and students, our educational system has not faced the drastic changes experienced by many institutions, with one exception.

Prior to the pandemic, AU students were given the option of in-person or online exam invigilation; this has been reduced to an online option only. Previously, students were able to write exams in any of AU's buildings in Athabasca, Edmonton, or Calgary, free of charge. Other options included invigilation through the Exam Invigilation Network at local accredited post-secondary institutions, such as

community colleges or technical institutions, as well as educational institutions, such as high schools or libraries, at varied rates.

For students unable or simply uninterested in in-person invigilation, AU has long offered ProctorU exam proctoring, at a cost of approximately \$30 CAD per session. ProctorU is currently used by over 1,000 institutions in over 129 countries worldwide, administering over 2,000,000 exams per year. Other schools use similar platforms, such as Examity, which maintains relationships with over 500 institutions, organizations, and corporations, administering over 1,000,000 assessments per year. For AU students with varied schedules, due to careers, travel, family obligations, disabilities, and illnesses, online invigilation is often a lifeline. Exams can be scheduled for virtually any hour in any time zone; in the early morning, in the middle of the night, and weekends.

However, the recent compulsory transition to online invigilation has created a great deal of problems. For many students, exam writing, a stressful process under regular circumstances, can become unbearable online. Being closely observed through a camera can cause discomfort and anxiety. Other problems include lags, computer malfunctions, technical problems, and software crashes. For students with children, those living in small accommodations and those without access to proper Wi-Fi and bandwidth, the online process can be difficult, especially when exams go over the allotted time due to problems. During the pandemic, students have reported extra time lags waiting for invigilators in addition to their exam time. For many, online invigilation also leads to privacy and surveillance concerns, with screen sharing, remote access to all data, and photo ID demonstration feeling increasingly invasive to some.

Student input about the transition to online invigilation, as well as online invigilation in general, has been mixed. AU student Dave Boyle states, "My setup at home isn't conducive to using ProctorU as I don't own a webcam, and secondly my machine is in an open living room in our

basement. Our house isn't setup to move my computer into a different room and Wi-Fi drops in the house so it isn't feasible to move my desktop to a different location anyway." Boyle continues, "I have anxiety issues. Having a person stare at me doesn't make me excited to write. At my local library, it is cheaper and they don't make me uncomfortable because they leave me alone in a room to work and randomly check in to make sure I'm not cheating. That is preferred."

Similarly, AU student Hyacinthe Abel describes a ProctorU experience, "It was ghastly. The exam was scheduled for 10am. But I started the exam at noon; by then it did not matter if I pass or fail. At the end, I submitted my questions and ended the exam but the ProctorU did not respond. While waiting for the ProctorU to respond, I telephoned the university and I was told by someone very friendly and helpful not to worry as the exam was saved as I went along. Never knew what the Proctor did." Hyacinthe continues, "The psychological effect of preparing for an exam, combine with the frustration of waiting for the ProctorU was too much. I nearly gave up." When asked if ProctorU would be an option once exam centres, Hyacinthe responded, "If I have a choice, no."

In contrast, AU student Cleopatra Sarantakos states, "My experience with ProctorU has been nothing less than exceptional. My wait time to connect with an invigilator has never exceeded 10 minutes and the instructions to get started were easy to follow. When technical issues arose, the invigilators were always swift in solving it. Before starting the exam, the invigilators always wish test-takers good luck, which I thought was a nice touch."

Similarly, AU student Katherine states, "I have only used ProctorU four times but I really do enjoy it! I have a bit of test anxiety when I'm in a class environment, so this helps me be able to concentrate and I end up doing way better. I love ProctorU and highly recommend!" Katherine continues, "My only concern with ProctorU is that the invigilator often is late or there is a lag in the video so sometimes I get interrupted. They also forget to turn off their mic and I can hear them typing." Katherine states, "I will keep using ProctorU as long as my finances allow. I sometimes

AU-thentic Events Upcoming AU Related Events

Virtual Student Social

Sat, May 30, 6:00 pm MDT

Online via Zoom

Hosted by AUSU

www.ausu.org/2020/05/virtual-student-social/

RSVP by May 29 to ausu@ausu.org

Three Minute Thesis Competition

Tues, June 2, 12:00 to 4:00 pm MDT

Online

Hosted by AU Faculty of Graduate Studies

news.athabasca.ca/events/three-minute-thesis-competition

Access livestream through above link

MBA Application Webinar

Wed, June 3, 11:00 am to 12:00 pm MDT

Online

Hosted by AU Faculty of Business

news.athabasca.ca/events/online-mba-application-webinar-20200603

Register through above link

Connect with AU – Live Chat

Wed, June 3, 3:00 to 4:00 pm MDT

Online

Hosted by AU

news.athabasca.ca/events/connect-with-au-live-chat

No pre-registration necessary; access through above link

Virtual Student Social

Thur, June 4, 6:00 pm MDT

Online via Zoom

Hosted by AUSU

www.ausu.org/2020/05/virtual-student-social/

RSVP by June 3 to ausu@ausu.org

The Grad Lounge

Fri, June 5, 1:00 to 2:00 pm MDT

Online via Microsoft Teams

Hosted by AU Faculty of Graduate Studies

news.athabasca.ca/events/the-grad-lounge-june-5

No pre-registration necessary; access through above link

All events are free unless otherwise noted.

don't have the extra cash to be able to do my exam at home, so then I am forced to go to campus where there is no additional fee."

Although ProctorU appeared overwhelmed at the start of the pandemic, service has recently improved, as they appear to have slowly adjusted to the influx of users. Although some students appear pleased with their experiences with online invigilation, others have been disappointed. Perhaps, some will continue with ProctorU in the future; however, it appears that many students with the option to write in-person will choose to do so. For others, despite problems, platforms, such as ProctorU will allow students to continue their education uninterrupted, even in post-pandemic times.

For students with questions about the ProctorU process, consult [AU's FAQs](#).

Natalia Iwanek is currently completing her Bachelor of Arts in English at Athabasca University and is also a freelance editor and writer. She can be contacted at <https://www.nataliaiwanekediting.com>.



Fly on the Wall

Crossing The Learning Technology Rubicon with a Caesura

Jason Sullivan



An ironic thing happened to me on the way to writing this column. I'd forgotten the page number for a reference I'd found in a snail-text (book) I'd checked out of the AU Library. Google's wonders shortly provided the needed notation: the answer, as such, was to be found on page 30 of Jean Baudrillard's *The Illusion of the End*. The content in question was Jean Benveniste's supposed discovery that at a molecular level water retains a memory impression. Somehow, some way, researchers in 1988 found that "water diluent 'remembered' the antibody long after it was gone". Like a

backside who'd spent the day loafing rather than studying, water seemed capable of remembering aspects it'd encountered in its environment.

Methodological concerns remained, however. Maybe researchers were unconsciously getting results they wanted to see? In the end, we're all humans—even when technology in a lab or in our life seems to be doing the work for us. By the time I emerged from the wriggling morass of competing reputable claims, the hue, tone and texture of my thinking was irrevocably changed. My mind was like a river diverted; the online spell had reframed my thoughts and led inexorably back to the hard fact that facts themselves are fodder for endless debate. Technology had got the better of me in that the process of information production had itself become my mental theme. I'd been, in a sense, reprogrammed by the tools which I'd used to seek a simple answer.

Do Machines Have All the Answers? It Depends What You Think!

Just by knowing that Google Books would provide me with the answer let me quickly and easily utilize the total recall capacities of technology. Our thoughts themselves do not necessarily

function like machines, however. As Victor Frankl famously noted, between stimulus and response there is a space. And that space, in poetry known as a *caesura*, sets a tone or metre or rhythm that often makes all the difference as the discourse unfurls. The thoughtful flow of my being was punctured and interrupted by my resorting to the technology of the times to find an answer. Had I leafed through the library book itself I'd have stayed in character, as such, and my thought would have embodied a more stream of consciousness flow based on Baudrillard's words that I was originally reading. The trade-off would have been time, but perhaps we human machines are too punctual anyway.

The Technology of Memory

The memory of water became for me an inquiry into the technology of memory; a whole new metrical methodology was introduced to my thinking by this *caesura*. A *caesura*, says Merriam Webster, is one of "those slight pauses one makes as one reads verse...more often we need these little stops (which may be, but are not necessarily, set off by punctuation) to introduce the cadence and phrasing of natural speech into the metrical scheme. The word *caesura*, borrowed from Late Latin, is ultimately from Latin *caedere* meaning "to cut."...the general meaning of "a break or interruption" is thus conveyed. My train of thought, though not derailed, had certainly been diverted by my wading into the marshes of the internet. A new flow had been created out of a momentary rupture. The information on offer from the internet was literally writing me differently; just as a poem in its construction creates a certain syntax and diction.

Perhaps contrary to popular belief about the cornucopian panoply of the information superhighway we all know and love, the dangers of becoming distracted whilst seeking to retrieve a vital detail are numerous, numinous, and downright sinister. It's all fun and games until someone misses a course deadline. I'd veered close to total distraction in the details of a minor notation. At AU we are always on the cusp of such impetus to procrastination; be it dishes, the dog, the job, or recreational reading a million things in life can tear us away from our diligent scholarly activity.

So what did it mean that I had to tear my doe eyes away from a paperback to consult the internet for faster information retrieval? Certainly my stream of thought was silenced; the irony that the original reference was about memory seemed to arise as a by-product of the proceedings. Or did it? To remember, I had to use a machine to remember me into the place I was at, thus matching my mind with the key notation required to justify the reference. Scholarly activity lives in thickets like these; an uncited reference is the bane of every professor. So the enforced silence of a *caesura* implies more than just a stopping point on the path toward the production of true meaning. Sometimes, like most times, the spacing pause that refreshes comes to impart a sigh that produces a syntactical response all on its own.

To ignore the rhythm of a text and the implication of technology on our life's work as living, thinking, and expressing beings, is possibly to veer into a dark wood of madness. To lose oneself without even realizing it surely a definition of insanity. Where do we draw the line between our thoughts and their social and technological substrates from which they arise? Perhaps what we don't say while we seek information and 'the right words' is what matters most.

Quoth Jacques Derrida: "madness is indeed, essentially and generally, silence, stifled speech, within a *caesura* and a wound that open up life as historicity in general. Not a determined silence, imposed at one given moment rather than at any other, but a silence essentially linked to an act of force and a prohibition which opens history and speech." (Derrida, 54). A *caesura* ensures this technical break between meanings (think of the difference between rushing to a paper dictionary versus the rush to a laptop to Google a phrase). A pause, a gap, a stop, a space introduces itself

between the thing in mind and the linguistic tools on offer to speak oneself truthfully in text or speech.

Lost in the Space of a *Caesura*

Whatever I was going to say about Baudrillard's reference to the mysterious possibility of the memory of water, a rare citation from a philosopher who chose almost exclusively to use his own words as his text, was lost in the shifting mental abyss of time spent using technology to discover a fact. In this sense, as the phrase 'knows all but knows naught' aptly demonstrates, machines may have the answers, but it's our minds that give them colour and meaning. At AU our academic journey is inherently personal; there are less buffers to the magical impressions made upon our being as we evolve in tandem with our course material.

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The Creative Spark

Six Secrets You Should Know About Breakups

Marie Well



For those of us who carouse the dating scenes, breakups happen. After all, we could be looking for just the right person, maybe a true love to marry. No harm in that (for those who save sex for a lifetime partner).

But if you're married, common-law, or have a multi-year relationship, break-ups crush your soul. They rip your heart to shreds and leave you numb and aching for months, years, even forever. And if you have kids, a breakup could lead your little ones down a path of crime, depression, and suicide. Breakups are not meant to happen.

Yet, breakups are highly preventable, especially if you've ever loved the person.

Let's look at what a fiction writer says about breakup scenes. After all, good fiction writers know what makes people tick.

Insight 1: Breakups are gut-wrenching.

Fiction writer Rayne Hall says, “When lovers break up, they feel intense emotions — whether it’s anger or regret, relief or pain. Know what your characters feel, and let the reader feel the same” (83%).

I believe all breakups between long-term partners are tinged with regret. Why? Because we failed to make it work. If we had been wiser, we’d still be with our loved one. Until we learn how to love unconditionally, we might feel the heartache of disharmony in all our relationships.

Breakups hurt. Rayne Hall adds, “Make the break-up as difficult as possible for the [point-of-view] character. The reason for the difficulty can be whatever suits the story — love, guilt or fear. Just don’t make it easy” (86%).

One woman I knew broke up with her husband. Within a week, her child talked about quitting school and her husband found a new partner. It was heart-wrenching.

Insight 2: Breakups don't just happen and end. The ache drags on, sometimes forever.

According to Rayne Hall, “If you deal with the break-up in just a few short lines, it won’t convince the reader. Example: ‘This is unforgivable. I don’t ever want to see you again.’ ‘As you wish. It’s over between us’ A reader who sees nothing more than this two-line exchange will expect the couple to calm down and reconcile” (83%).

Even though brief breakups likely end up reconciled, don't take your chances. One whisper of “I want to end this” leads to deep-rooted hurt, distrust and perhaps even the end of the relationship. The end of an intimate relationship crushes the souls of you and those caught in the crossfire.

Insight 3: Breakups are planned in advance.

Sadly, Rayne Hall says, “Genuine break-ups don’t happen on the spur of the moment. At least one of the lovers has thought the matter through. The second character may have seen it coming, or may be taken by surprise” (83%).

No-one truly wants to hurt someone they've loved. The sad face and the release of a cry can haunt you for the rest of your life. But it's all preventable.

Insight 4: The person being broken up with will have an emotional reaction

Rayne Hall suggests, “The breakupee won’t simply say ‘yes, okay’ at once, but will react with an emotion — surprise, shock, hurt, humiliation, disbelief — before responding. You can show this emotion with a visceral reaction or with body language. Then he’ll either accept it, or fight for the relationship” (84%).

Rayne Hall says, “Decide on the emotions for each character. Choose at least three, although I recommend five or more. Here are some suggestions to choose from, although you may add others: regret, resentment, hurt, relief, fear, guilt, embarrassment, shame, anger, hatred, longing, despair, pity, hope, humiliation, triumph” (84%).

As for the emotions, Rayne Hall says, “For example, a character may feel guilt, then pity, then relief. Or he may feel anger at first, then confusion and disbelief, and finally humiliation and hurt” (85%).

One fellow thought that flirting with other women would mend his relationship with wife. But his flirtations enraged her, caused her to scream. If you want to mend a relationship, stirring up negative emotions in your partner will only drive him or her away. You need to fight for your love without fighting, but through giving nothing but selfless love.

Insight 5: Breakups lead to bodily pain.

“After the breakup,” says Rayne Hall, “If you use the ‘scene & sequel’ format of scene structure, the sequel should be filled with the [point of view] character’s emotions, showing how she feels after the break-up. Instead of spelling them out, describe them viscerally: Hollow pain ached in her chest where love and hope used to be” (85%).

The heart can twist and ache. The soul can feel emptied. If you love your partner, but he or she is not treating you right, chances are you’re not treating him or her right either. But give 100% pure love, and you’ll see the greatest love bloom and flourish, at least from you and eventually from your partner.

Insight 6: Breakups may not be the end.

Rayne Hall says your character “hopes against hope that things will change in the last minute, and that the break-up can be averted. This is especially true if they have been together for a long time, if they have planned a future together, or if she loves him intensely ... Depending on the genre you write, the separation doesn’t need to be permanent, even though the characters believe that it is. In Romance, circumstances will change so the two will be united for a ... Happily-Ever-After ... ending” (84%).

The Marriage Foundation says that if a woman leaves her husband for another man, chances are the relationship is over. But almost every other case can be saved. A man who leaves his wife for a younger woman, they say, can still return to his wife if she opens her heart unconditionally.

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The Struggling Student Rants Home: An Asset & A Liability, Part II

Angela Pappas



The debate about whether homeownership is an asset or a liability continues. It’s a controversial subject, so it’s hard for some people to make a confident decision.

Those on one side continue marching towards financial freedom alongside Dave’s “baby steps.” At the same time, the other side keeps hollering, telling us we need to wake up. Dave Ramsey insists everyone needs to pay off their consumer debt, save up their emergency fund and their kids’ college tuition, and then start aggressively putting away money to buy their own home—all in that order.

Dave’s argument was in the previous Struggling Student Rants. Then, you have financial celebrities like Robert Kiyosaki, Tony

Robbins, and Grant Cardone. These self-proclaimed financial gurus claim those at the top of the financial food chain just want to keep the ostriches from taking their heads out of the sand. It's tough to decide who to believe, as they all present very good arguments.

Kiyosaki (2017) explains that the school system and our parents teach us early on that houses are a solid investment—but they're not (p. 13). He says a house, like a fancy car or a boat, is a liability and a waste of people's money. Eyebrows raise at this when I mention it, but I agree. The author explains that a home is not an intangible fixed asset like it's advertised to be. True assets put money in your pockets, whereas liabilities take money out of them (2017, pp. 80-85). Kiyosaki presents many arguments against homeownership, simply for the sake of owning the roof over your head, but nonstop expenses are an essential one. Owning a home, or a part of it if there's a mortgage, comes with owning countless expenses. If you've been renting until now, you may feel more empathy towards your miser landlord once you realize the expenses involved.

Most are familiar with common utility costs, including natural gas, electricity, and water. Then, there are the elective utilities, such as cable and internet service—although after COVID-19 people have come to realize they are not so *elective* after all. You will also need a landline if you live in a remote area with no cellphone reception. All these costs may, or may not, form part of your rent, if you've rented until now, so you may already be familiar with them. On top of these standard utilities, the water bill will contain a separate fee for sewer charges. Most municipalities charge sewer rates based on water usage. Then there may be a separate fee for trash and recycling—sometimes included in the water bill, sometimes in the property tax bill. Speaking of which, property taxes are typically based on where the property is; the square footage of the lot and home; the style of home; as well as any improvements made to the property itself. Improvements might include things such as adding a swimming pool or renovating the basement to make the home more comfortable. It all depends on the municipality.

Filipowicz and Globberman (2019), from the Fraser Institute, explain, "The rate at which property is taxed depends on the jurisdiction in which it is situated, as well as its use" (p. 1). Property taxes also usually include a charge which they disburse among the local public school boards and libraries, regardless of whether you have school-aged children or not.

Finally, heaven forbid your municipality decides to upgrade or make repairs to your street! You and your neighbours should have thought twice before complaining about driving through potholes to get home. Guess who has to foot the bill for that? If you guessed the homeowner, you got it right. The majority of the time the city or town will throw these charges back into the property tax bill. Sometimes, though, the homeowner might get a nice surprise: a separate charge altogether.

Scared yet? If you're already familiar with these costs and think nothing of them, one thing you may not have thought of are operational costs. Operational form part of commercial property expense management practices. They are not a common practice with private home owners though. Operational costs include items like general HVAC upkeep, such as furnace maintenance; water heater maintenance; plumbing failures; lawn maintenance; and the list goes on. You get the idea.

My family thinks I'm crazy because few residential owners will, in practice, set money aside each month to pay for maintenance and upkeep. Yet, when your furnace completely breaks down in the middle of January, or the water refuses to stop seeping in through the foundation, you'll quickly realize the value of a fund specifically set aside for these standard repair costs. The same principle applies to anything which needs periodic care or will otherwise depreciate—such as a roof, siding, or insulation. It's rare someone has at least \$10,000 lying around, to replace the 30-year shingles on the roof. This is where your operational fund kicks in and you should consider adding it to your budget as a monthly expense.

Finally, as far as standard expenses go, there are also certain insurance policies that need to be in place. Most people know that when buying a home they need a down-payment. Anything less than twenty percent, though, requires mortgage default insurance from Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC). This is simply because the bank wants to make sure they'll get their money back. This insurance isn't for you, the borrower, though. It protects the lender, who pays the premium to CMHC. If the borrower defaults on the mortgage, CMHC reimburses the lender for the balance. So why is this your expense? Because the lender will almost always pass this cost on to the borrower. They don't want to absorb the cost of a bad underwriting risk if the borrower lacks the funds needed. This insurance premium is typically included into your mortgage, so you might not even see it if you don't know what to look for. But it's a sizeable amount you shouldn't ignore because you've likely lost two to three-months' wages right there. "The CMHC Mortgage Loan Insurance premium is calculated as a percentage of the loan and is based on the size of your down payment. The higher the percentage of the total house price/value that you borrow, the higher percentage you will pay in insurance premiums" (CMHC, 2018)

Then there's your standard property insurance policies, which cover damage to your own home and property. These are much more expensive than a tenant insurance policy because they don't only cover your furniture, they cover the entire building and any outside structures, like your garage and shed. These policies also help cover defence costs and any liability someone living in the home encounters.

It's not just our neighbours to the south that are court-happy nowadays and defence costs can quickly render someone bankrupt. It will all depend on the policy conditions and exclusions, so read your policy carefully. The costs of these policies will vary a lot. It will depend on factors such as your home; the values of the home and any other buildings; the location; and the insurer, to list a few. Being the frugal one in the family, I cut our home and auto insurance premiums almost in half a couple years ago thanks to AU. They have a pretty sweet deal with a major insurer for all AU students and alumni—no it's not Geico. You should check it out in your student home-page if you're interested in cutting costs.

There's one thing to be cautious about, though: anyone working from home needs to have specialty insurance coverage. This applies to those working for an employer, such as now with COVID-19, or as a side-gig such as selling Avon. Not only will your typical home insurance policy not cover anything related to these things, but they also have the right to entirely cancel your insurance policy, if they find out you've been knowingly hiding this from them.

Last, but not least, don't forget about life insurance if you have others who depend on you to pay the bills. When you apply for a home mortgage, the bank will usually try to convince you to buy life insurance for the mortgage through them too. They'll try to sell you a sense of security, and explain they can add the cost to your mortgage payment, so you won't even notice. What's even more confusing: each lender has a different name for these life insurance policies. Regardless, they are all based around the same concept. Coverage kicks in, if one of the homeowners' passes away, and the bank gets back the amount owed on the mortgage. Sounds enticing I know. But it's really a type of very expensive life insurance with terrible coverage for your buck. I'm a big fan of life insurance, just not through marketing gimmicks. Erica Alini (2017) explains the reasons to think twice about these policies in her report through [Global News](#).

Adding all these expenses up, which are not all inclusive, makes it more difficult to say, with conviction, that you want to buy rather than rent. Keeping your head screwed on straight can be tough, despite longing for exclusive rights to your home. I've often caught myself daydreaming of what it would feel like to deck the halls every Christmas in a mini-mansion-like Kevin's mom in [Home Alone](#). I also dream of long, lazy summers by my palm-tree laden pool, doing nothing but reading books and sun tanning.

But then I snap out of it and think of the bills Kevin's parents must have had to pay, to keep up with that idyllic house. Kevin's mom must have been either making meth in their basement or their dad fixing the books for a local Mafioso. There's no other explanation for how they were able to provide for their family that well. I respect that not everyone wants Jay-Z's lifestyle. And many argue that Tony Robbins and Grant Cardone can preach all they want, with millions in their bank accounts backing them up. Regardless of the difference in opinions, we all still need a place to call home. But we do need good judgement when deciding.

Grant Cardone mentions in his 2016 [Entrepreneur.com](#) blog post, "[Buying a House is for Suckers](#)." I agree with his blog, although the title itself is badly worded. Mr. Cardone is simply trying to get his point across in the usual LA-extravagant way: homes cost money to maintain and to live in. You should first have the funds in your bank account, either in full or at least a sizeable chunk of it, before you get a loan out for what your heart desires. The most important piece, though, is that you should also have the continual income streams to keep up with the expenses of home ownership. Analyze first how much it's actually going to cost you and then figure out how much you need coming in, and with low risk.

As you've just read, the mortgage payments are not the only thing you need to keep up with. I always think of this when friends and family are dead set on upgrading their lifestyle—or even when I start getting crazy ideas in my head. I'm quite possibly writing this now for that exact same purpose—to think twice before I commit our regular paycheck for the next twenty years.

As for myself and my family, we're going to stick to renting for a while. Without a doubt, it feels amazing to not worry about the water heater falling apart or squirrels getting in the attic. I also don't miss forking over a large chunk of change every month for property taxes. When I mention this to friends and family they either look at me as if I've gone off the deep end or with pity in their eyes, as if we're now homeless. Sometimes I falter and think of the luxuries and freedom

that comes with owning the roof over your head. More often than not, however, I try to ignore their comments and think of the luxuries and freedom that comes with owning multiple streams of income. And if the naysayers insist, I simply forward them Cindy Perman's article, "[20 Hidden Costs of Home Ownership](#)." At that point they will usually give up trying to convince me otherwise, all the while trying to conceal the horror of realization in their own eyes. Although published in 2010, it's a very good reminder of why I want to start running like Forrest Gump when realtors approach with that twinkle in their eyes.

References

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Angela Pappas is a part-time AU Certificate student who enjoys learning and discussing anything personal finance and personal development related.



Change Up Your Breakfast Routine

Xin Xu

Bored of your classic cereal for breakfast? Want some flair without having to prepare an extravagant breakfast? COVID-19 has given me the opportunity to explore more diverse breakfast options without resorting to the most efficient, bland-tasting breakfast. Lately, having the urge to try something different for breakfast, I've created several recipes that might help with the struggles of having an empty pantry. Most of these recipes only need a few ingredients and can be prepared in under 15 minutes.



1. **The tuna cheese melt:** on days when I ran out of eggs but was too lazy to pick up a fresh carton, I opted for an alternative protein. Canned tuna has a good variety of nutrients such as vitamin D, omega 3 fatty acids and protein. Moreover, it is easily spreadable on a piece of toast or English muffin. Top the combination with some cheese and you have a gourmet breakfast you may even find on a menu at a top tier hotel.

2. **Chives pancake:** Having eaten pancakes for an entire month, I thought that adding some savory flair to the traditional pancake would help stimulate my appetite. For those who prefer green onions, there are plenty of pre-made frozen green onion cakes at your local Chinese supermarket. Otherwise, add some chopped chives to your pancake mix and sprinkle some salt and pepper instead of sugary syrup for a unique flavour profile.





3. Gourmet Oatmeal: Quaker's instant oatmeal has been a staple in my residence for many years. The day we ran out of Quaker instant oatmeal, my father would rather skip breakfast than to try something else. If you're looking for something different than your typical brown sugar topped microwavable oatmeal, there's a few options.

- Chocolate banana oatmeal: this simple recipe combines sliced banana with a handful of chocolate chip to help flavour the oatmeal
- Apple cinnamon oatmeal: two ingredients present in most kitchens include apples and cinnamon powder which create an excellent topping for the plain oatmeal.
- Savory Mexican oatmeal: For those who are a fan of more savory breakfast items, try adding some shredded cheddar, corn, tomatoes and cilantro to top the oatmeal.

4. Spinach pancakes: When looking for a healthier pancake alternative, I've always looked to hide ingredients in my pancake mix. If you're a fan of fruits, adding bananas, apples or berries into the mix can instantly add ingredients without disturbing the pancake texture. For myself, using the leftover spinach in my fridge helped turn my breakfast into a colorful one of a kind treat.



5. Falafel Omelet: For those looking for a gourmet version of the regular omelet, try adding falafels and spinach for a change in texture and flavour. On days where I feel like going vegetarian with my meals, falafels make for a great protein replacement.

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



COVID 19

Christine Saby

COVID 19 illuminates our global connectedness
Yet now it keeps us apart
Great efforts are underway to fight this disease
Although we missed out on an early start

Everywhere new groups are forming
With no time for norming
Amidst political storming
Essential workers show true grit and heart

It takes only a small group to spread great ideas
In search of a vaccine
Weighing risks and benefits
While we watch in horror the areas hardest hit

If we work hard
If we all work together
We may weather the many hardships
It will command great effort and partnerships

If we value human life
If we truly collaborate
We can beat COVID 19
Or at least see it abate

[Christine wrote this as part of her NURS 625 course, so it is not original, but she was encouraged to share it with other students, and was happy to provide it for free for publication in The Voice Magazine -Ed.]

Council Connection

May 20, 2020 Meeting

Natalia Iwanek



The most recent AUSU Council Meeting took place on Wednesday, May 20, 2020 from 6:30 to 8:30 pm MT.

All Councillors were in attendance, with the exception of Councillor Ian Stewart. Also in attendance were *The Voice's* Managing Editor Karl Low and Council Meeting Reporter Natalia Iwanek.

Key items included COVID-19, Council Reports, and the Finance Committee member appointment.

Agenda and Minutes

President Natasha Donahue called the meeting to order at 6:34 pm MT. The agenda and all minutes were accepted without issue.

Action Items

Natasha continued with a review of the action items,

none of which were outstanding.

New Business

Natasha began with amendments to *Policy 2.13 Code of Ethics*, in particular Section 01 concerned with conflict of interest, as well as Section 11. The motion carried unanimously, with a move by Councillor Josh Ryan and a second by VPFA Monique Durette.

Next, Natasha spoke of the quality applications received for the vacant Finance Committee position, with a breakout room created for Karl and Natalia while Councillors reviewed the applications. At 7:22 pm MT, Councillors unanimously appointed Mark Toews as voting member, with a move by Josh and a second by Monique. Mel Marisol was appointed voting member to the MEC Committee for a third term with a move by VPEX Stacey Hutchings and a second by Councillor Regan Johnson.

Next, the motion to approve the additional allocation of \$10,000 from the AUSU reserve to the Computer Bursary for the 2019-2020 fiscal year was carried unanimously, with a move by Natasha and a second by Regan. This was done to allow AUSU the room to provide more computers for students, since, with the advent of COVID-19, they are seeing an increase in the number of applications for the bursary.

The motion to approve the allocation of up to \$5,000 from the AUSU reserve to ProctorU for the 2019-2020 fiscal year was carried unanimously as well, with a move by Stacey and a second by Josh. Natasha revealed that this will purchase approximately 100 ProctorU codes, which will be awarded to select students after the completion of a survey. Executive Director Jodi Campbell stated that "This is a kind of win-win initiative in some ways," as it will allow AUSU to garner information about students' experiences during COVID-19 and continually adapt to student needs. During the March ProctorU giveaway, AUSU experienced "overwhelming engagement" with about 850 applications, to which approximately 30 more have trickled in.

Next, Natasha continued with an update to the Ad Hoc Indigenous Representation Committee, mentioning that the Policy had taken more time than anticipated. The tentative date to fill seats, with three to five Councillors, the Executive Director and coordinator, and up to one member at

large, is the upcoming June Council meeting. According to the report, the role of this Committee will be “to help engage Indigenous students at Athabasca University in a respectful, robust, and sustainable way in order to work toward an organizational Indigenization strategy.” In addition, it is hoped that AUSU will be able to send members to CASA as Indigenous representatives on a federal level. Jodi mentioned that AUSU are often leaders and this type of initiative is not often seen in other student unions. Councillor Darcie Fleming was “thrilled as a Métis person” at the thought of bringing forward an Indigenous perspective.

Reports

Natasha continued with the President Report, mentioning the outreach she and Stacey had done with approximately 75 to 80% of CASA delegates, which will provide a foundation for the year ahead. In addition, she mentioned former President Brandon Simmons’ Outgoing Report, which focused on the transition period and COVID-19 challenges.

Stacey’s VPEX Report focused on the transition, as well as making sure that the government understands AU’s differences from traditional brick and mortar post-secondary institutions. She briefly discussed an e-meeting with the Ministry of Advanced Education and the Alberta government’s plans to move ahead with the Alberta 2030 Plan, as well as Outcome-Based Funding (or performance-based as it is more commonly known) in post-secondary education.

Darcie questioned if the government will be taking a second look since the transition to online education, to which Stacey replied that the province is going ahead with performance-based funding. However, instead of the original ten metrics that institutions were going to have to meet, there is now only one metric, that of cost-containment, expected to be put into place.

Monique’s VPFA Report was next, as she mentioned her job shadowing experience with Stacey, as well as a brief mention of the Finance Committee Report, which did not meet in April.

Next Councillor Katy Lowe’s Awards Committee Report began with a mention of the \$10,000 Computer Bursary allocation, which the Report reveals increased remaining funds to \$14,031.49. Jodi praised the Committee of being able to process nine Computer Bursaries over the past month, as a significant amount of work to be taking on, especially as a first task.

Stacey continued with the Member Engagement and Communications Committee Report, stating that they created six YouTube Videos and two Podcasts in April and will soon launch a virtual student social with online games, trivia, and prizes. The student social meetings will take place through Zoom on Saturday May 30, 2020 and Thursday June 4, 2020 at 6 pm MT. Students are asked to RVSP by midnight on May 29, 2020 and June 3, 2020, respectively at ausu@ausu.org. More information is available on the [AUSU website](#).

Jodi mentioned that [Episode 25](#) of the AUSU Podcast, “We Asked...He Answered...AU Uncovered,” with AU Registrar Richard MacLeod was “phenomenal” and “provided great info.” For students interested in interviews with *The Voice* Managing Editor Karl Low and regular contributor and former VPFA Brittany Daigle, check out [Episode 28](#): “The Voice Magazine – Telling AU Stories since 1998!”. Students can access additional Podcasts on the [AUSU website](#).

Communications and Member Services Coordinator Donette Kingyens continued with the Communications and Member Services Report stating that 242 applications had been received during the recent AUSU award cycle, as well as a quadruple increase in LinkedIn applications, as a result of custom invites. In addition, this year’s [AUGSA Graduate Student Research Conference](#), which will be virtual and free, will allow undergraduates to attend as well. [The 2020 call for abstracts](#) opens soon, with the Conference scheduled for October 16 and 17, 2020.

Next Meeting and Adjournment

With no questions, the meeting was officially adjourned at 8:09 pm MT. The next meeting will take place on June 17, 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](#).

Natalia Iwanek is currently completing her Bachelor of Arts in English at Athabasca University and is also a freelance editor and writer. She can be contacted at <https://www.nataliaiwanekediting.com>.



The Study Dude

Marie Well

Open the Gates for You, The Humanities and Arts Rock Star



I want you to be rock star when it comes to acing the Humanities and Arts. You'll likely run into courses in these disciplines if you are studying for a degree. A well-rounded education is the aim, right?

Well, The Open University and I will give you a rock star edge when it comes to interpreting texts in the Humanities and Arts.

Let's get you ready for A-plus performance:

Rock Star Tip #1: Analyzing historical documents is your new sport.

How do you read a historical text? The Open University says, "Reading an historical document is different Much of it may be easy enough to follow, but there will probably be a number of terms that are 'of the period' or references to unfamiliar people and events that you need to look up" (20%).

For instance, you'll need to know "who wrote the document – what do we know about these people's background and particular interest in the matter? when was it written – how soon after the events it refers to? why was it written – who or what was it written 'for'? what was the author in a position to know; is it likely to provide sound information? Then you can judge whether the document is a reliable source for your purposes, and just what it might mean" (20%).

You'll need to ferret out bias to get a good sense of what went on. For instance, if today a liberal and a conservative each analyzed current affairs, you'd get two different views. And both of these views may seem bizarre to people studying us a hundred years from now.

Detecting bias in texts is huge. But what counts as bias and what counts as truth? When my brother tried teaching Mom an atheist view, I warned her, "There exists multiple viewpoints on any topic, and each of those viewpoints has merits and weaknesses. Be careful which view you choose." I held a Christian bias.

Historical documents are no different. Whoever writes the text holds a bias. A holistic view on different angles can ground your analysis in a broader truth.

Rock Star Tip #2: "I think philosophical texts, therefore I am."

Philosophical texts are dense. According to The Open University, "Nobody can read a philosophical text at the speed they read a novel and understand what they read. You have to take it very slowly, trying to make some sense of it as you go along, a bit at a time. That is because these texts take the form of an argument about certain ideas. Unless you understand the first stage of the argument reasonably well you will not be able to make sense of the next stage, and so on. And, often, the argument is dense. Abstract ideas just are hard to understand, so every sentence may take a while to sort out" (18%).

My best performances reading philosophical texts happened when I looked up in a dictionary every word I didn't know, jotting down the definitions. That was the only way I could grasp *The Iliad*. Without the dictionary, I wouldn't have had a clue.

Read slowly to enjoy the heavy thought.

Rock Star Tip #3: God made music—and music ed.

Need to study music? The Open University says, "when you come to study the music, you have to listen carefully and in an 'active' way – thinking about the way the piece is put together or the contribution different instruments make Concentrate on the silence before you start listening. Sounds exist in what is otherwise silence. If you stop to appreciate that background, the textures and 'colours' of the music will be more vivid. Just listen and think – don't do anything else at the same time. Get used to concentrating on what you hear. Shut your eyes if it helps. Try to listen without being interrupted. If you are interrupted it is probably worth starting the piece again from the beginning" (21%).

I have some insight to shed on music studies. I scored the highest grade in a World Music class. In the exams, we had to listen to recorded music, identify the country of origin and style of music—even the particular instruments.

Here's how I scored high:

Step 1: First, learn the structure of songs. Many modern songs have a verse/chorus alternating structure with maybe five verses. Each verse has the same melody but different words. The chorus typically repeats its same melody and same words.

Step 2: Once you know the basic structure of a song, break down the verse and chorus into beats. Typically, songs have four to eight drumbeats per line—and four to six lines per verse. Put the numbers one to eight on a single line. These are your beats for the first line of the first verse.

Step 3: Now listen carefully to the music. Focus on one instrument and hear what it does. Does it grow higher in tone? Does it go up and down like a wave? Does it end the line with an extended note? Notice what it does and then insert what it does in the beats on your grid. I might put the word, "horn" and then put two short horizontal lines side by side, one higher than the other, to denote the two sounds growing higher in pitch.

Step 4: Repeat the process for other instruments, focusing on the sounds that stand out or that end a four or eight count. Write them up in your grid.

Step 5: Do this for the whole song—all the verses and the repeated chorus. Separate each verse and each chorus with a single blank line.

Step 6: Come up with crazy visuals to associate the music with the composer, style of music, and any other indicators. If it's a Russian composer, and the song has a super fast drum roll, and the song is about a father-child dynamic, then imagine a Russian fur hat on a little drummer boy. Visualizations for memorization's sake are referred to as mnemonics.

Rock Star Tip #4: Learn German by living it.

Want to learn a language? The Open University advises, “When you are trying to become familiar with texts it helps a lot if you can surround yourself with them. You can pin the maps you are studying on your walls, or illustrations of paintings, buildings, and artifacts. And you can get into the habit of tuning in to a music or foreign language radio station, perhaps having it on in the background as you get up each morning” (22%).

Here's a bonus: Students who go to language immersion schools for the summer might get recruited in the Canadian Security Intelligence Service (called CSIS). You could be a spy. I kid you not. I read that in a book, although it applied to the United States' CIA.

If you can't afford immersion school, immerse yourself at home in the culture. Buy DVD's with subtitles—not English subtitles, but subtitles in the same language as the DVD. I also read to do a Google image search on a foreign word and see what images pop up. The images could tell an unexpected story. Type “girl” in Hindi, German, and so forth, and notice the cultural differences in its pictorial representations.

Final Rock Star Tips: Humanities and Arts expertise will make you handsome.

No not really, unless handsome grades reflect on your appearance. “Analysing a text shows you how it works and gives you many clues to what it might mean. First, examine a feature of the text that is particularly striking, and look out for patterns in it. Then go on to analyse the text as fully as you can before trying to reach any conclusions about its meanings” (31%).

It's similar to analyzing music: pay special attention to anything striking and any parts that start or end a particular segment. And use patterns to structure your analysis.

The Open University sums up how to analyze texts not from your time or place: “So when you are studying a text that has come down from the past, or from a culture that is different from your own, it is important to find out as much as you can about that time and place – including the way of life, values and beliefs of the people for whom the text was written” (34%).

On a final note, try analyzing texts from every spiritual tradition, but analyze the texts from the viewpoints of different believers. For instance, analyze Christianity from a Muslim perspective. And analyze Sikhism from a Christian perspective. That exercise will really drive home how our cultural lens shapes our perceptions.

After all, morality is time and place bound, isn't it? Well, so are texts. And maybe universal truths come embedded in both.

References

Open Learn: Free Learning from The Open University. (2016). *Processes of Study in the Arts and Humanities*. The Open University. E-book course excerpt.



Student Sizzle — AU's Hot Social Media Topics

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



AthaU Facebook Group

Donnette from AUSU posts an alert about a tech issue with myAU; Heath adds a link to allow students to access their courses directly. David's looking to connect with another student in the architecture program. Kimberly asks about delays in assignment marking; several responses, including those from tutors, strongly suggest contacting tutors in case they haven't received an auto-notice that the assignment was submitted.

Other posts include courses with etext, switching programs, early access to course material, Vikings, and courses ADMN 233, ANTH 272, BIOL 401, NUTR 331, and RELS 313.

Twitter

@AthabascaU tweets: "For some, the experience of a new normal has been ok. For some of us, it's been plain bad. #PowerEDbyAU is here to ease the pain with a FREE 90-minute course built give you the strategies, tools, & frameworks to successfully navigate this new reality <https://bit.ly/36laKkr>."

@austudentsunion tweets: "AUSU invites all #AthabascaU students to fill out our survey about the impact of COVID-19 on their studies to help us advocate for you! We are also giving away 100 free ProctorU online exams for undergrads who fill out our survey! <https://surveymonkey.com/r/AUSUCovid19> #igo2AU."

YouTube

AU's pres Fassina features in The Calgary Chamber's #Here4YYC: The future of education.

Scholarship of the Week

Digging up scholarship treasure for AU students.

Scholarship name: Lift Parts Express Scholarship

Sponsored by: Lift Parts Express

Deadline: June 30, 2020

Potential payout: \$500

Eligibility restriction: Applicants must be Canadian or U.S. residents, be between the ages of 16 and 21, be attending school in the fall of 2020, and have a GPA of 3.0 or greater.

What's required: An online application form, along with an essay (no word limit) on how much you expect to spend to finish your schooling, how you intend to pay for your schooling, and what you expect your job to be once you're finished your schooling.

Tips: Check out previous scholarship winners for inspiration.

Where to get info: www.forkliftpartsarizona.com/forkliftparts.php



Homemade is Better

Creamy Coleslaw

Chef Corey



Coleslaw is always better the next day, but, in our house, we rarely make coleslaw days ahead. So this is a bit of a cheater recipe. We adapted this recipe from a few other recipes we've seen, and my wife and I make it slightly different from each other. For example, she likes to add celery seed to hers, I usually don't. Regardless, this is a staple in our house when we have pulled pork, burgers, hotdogs, fried chicken, or just because its Tuesday!

We usually buy the pre-cut coleslaw mix from our local store because its already done for you and it's a small amount vs buying a two whole cabbages, carrots, and whatever else you want in your coleslaw. At my local store I can usually buy a 400g mix for \$2.00 a bag, some places it might \$3. It contains shredded green cabbage, shredded red cabbage, and shredded carrots, in case you want to make it yourself.

Creamy Coleslaw

Ingredients

1/3 cup mayo
1/3 sour cream
¼ apple cider vinegar
1 tsp celery seed
Kosher Salt
¼ tsp Black Pepper
1 400g coleslaw mix

Directions

- 1) Mix together the first 4 ingredients, plus the black pepper. Add a large pinch of kosher salt and taste.
- 2) Adjust salt and pepper if needed.
- 3) Put coleslaw mix into a large bowl, add in the dressing and mix.
- 4) Cover and leave for 3-4 hours or over night, OR you can eat this immediately.
- 5) Wasn't that easy!





Dear
Barb

Barbara Godin

Selfish Concern

Dear Barb:

Hi, I am 19 years old and my mom was just diagnosed with MS. My mom is a single parent and I am her only child. We have always been very close and get along well. She has had a lot of symptoms but we weren't sure exactly what was causing them. The MS diagnosis was a shock to us and now we have to find a way to cope. I have no problem being my mother's caregiver, but I have some concerns about whether I will be able to care for her properly. Right now she is not too bad, her symptoms have been vague, such as tremors in her hands, fatigue, numbness, and vision problems. I am concerned about what may happen as the MS progresses. What if I can't manage? I know there are support services, but I am concerned about the emotional affects. I love my mom and hate that this is happening to her.

I guess I am looking for some support. I want to care for my mom but I also want be able to have a life. I want to go to college and get married one day and have children. I feel selfish thinking of myself while my mom is going through this terrible situation. Am I being selfish by thinking of myself at this time? Maybe some other students or readers who are going through similar issues would be able to offer me some advice. Thanks Tanya.

Hello Tanya:

So sorry that you have to go through this at such a young age, well at any age really. The symptoms of MS vary from person to person. How the disease progresses is

unpredictable. Some individuals are able to remain stable for years and for others the progression is rapid. You should be connected with the MS Society of Canada. I am sure they will be able to answer your questions and provide you with the support you need. I would definitely suggest you and your mother join a support group. You both will need help to navigate this somewhat difficult journey.

No, you are not being selfish, it is normal to want to have a life for yourself, while also caring for your mother. I think you are getting way ahead of yourself. You said your mom is doing okay right now and she may remain stable for a long time. It would be a good idea for you to continue your education and plan for a future. When your mother's situation begins to decline and she needs more care, the MS Society will be able to direct you to the facilities that you and your mom require.

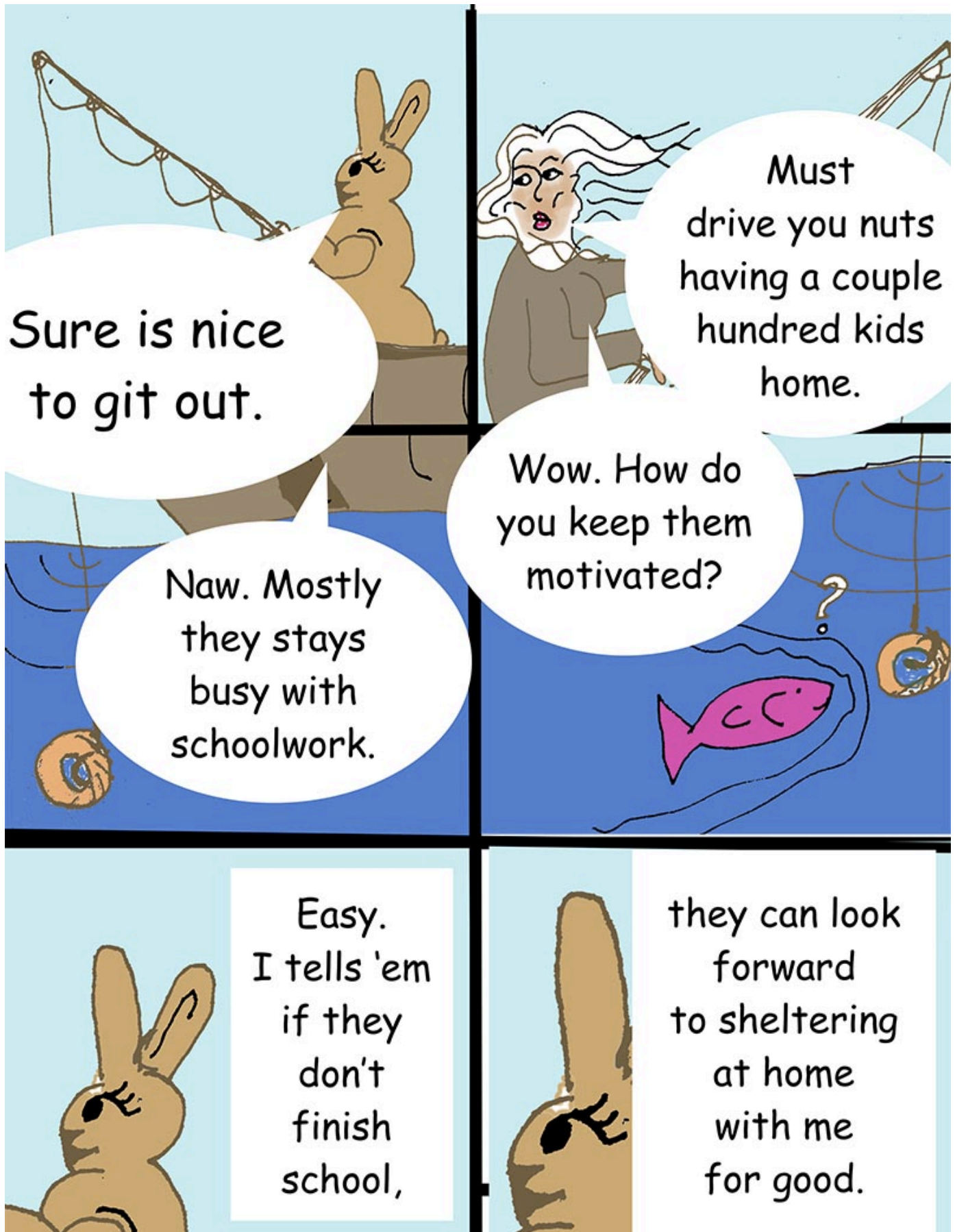
In the meantime enjoy your mother and continue to live your life. Hopefully someone who is going through a similar situation will reach out to The Voice. Thanks for writing.

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



Poet Maeve
Having the Kids at Home

Wanda Waterman



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

AUSU Open Mic Podcast with *The Voice*!

Want to know more about what goes on behind the scenes with *The Voice* Magazine? In our latest AUSU Open Mic Podcast, AUSU sits down with *The Voice* Managing Editor Karl Low and *The Voice* Writer Brittany Daigle to talk about the work that goes into making the weekly online magazine for Athabasca University students.

Listen to the podcast [here](#).



Starring: The Voice Managing Editor Karl Low, The Voice Writer Brittany Daigle, and AUSU Executive Director Jodi Campbell.

Check out all *AUSU Open Mic* episodes on our website [here](#).

Also available on [Spotify](#), [Apple Podcasts](#), [Google Podcasts](#), and [Pocket Casts](#) (search "AUSU Podcast").



Student Support During COVID-19

Athabasca University has made updates to their supports in place for students impacted by the current COVID-19 pandemic. For information on AU support for students, visit their website [here](#).

AU also has a FREE mental health and wellness program through [Homewood Health](#).

For info on other support for students during the pandemic, visit the AUSU website [here](#).

IMPORTANT DATES

- May 30: [AUSU Virtual Student Social](#)
- May 30: [Deadline to apply for course extension for June](#)
- June 4: [AUSU Virtual Student Social](#)
- Jun 10: [Deadline to register in a course starting Jul 1](#)
- Jun 15: [Jul degree requirements deadline](#)
- Jun 17: [AUSU Public Council Meeting](#)

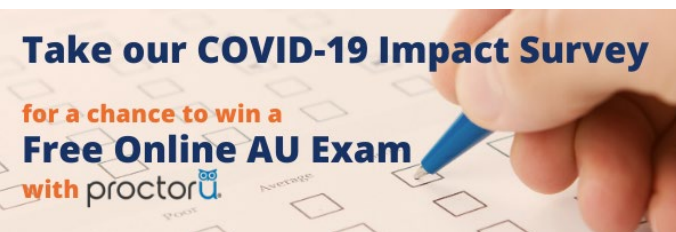
Take our COVID-19 Survey for a chance to Win a Free ProctorU Exam!

AUSU has launched a [brief survey](#) to get feedback from AU students about how COVID-19 has impacted their studies, which will help us to advocate on our behalf.

AUSU is giving away **100 FREE ProctorU codes** to AU undergrads that [fill out our survey](#)!



Click [here](#) to take the Survey.



AUSU Virtual Student Social

AUSU is hosting a Virtual Student Social! This will be a great opportunity to connect to fellow students through Zoom, play some fun trivia games, and get a chance to win some prizes and swag from your AU Students' Union!

Date: Thursday, June 4, 2020 at 6:00pm MT

RSVP to ausu@ausu.org **if you wish to attend!**

Include your name, student ID number when you RSVP.



CLASSIFIEDS

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