



THE VOICE

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COVID-19 Memory Archive

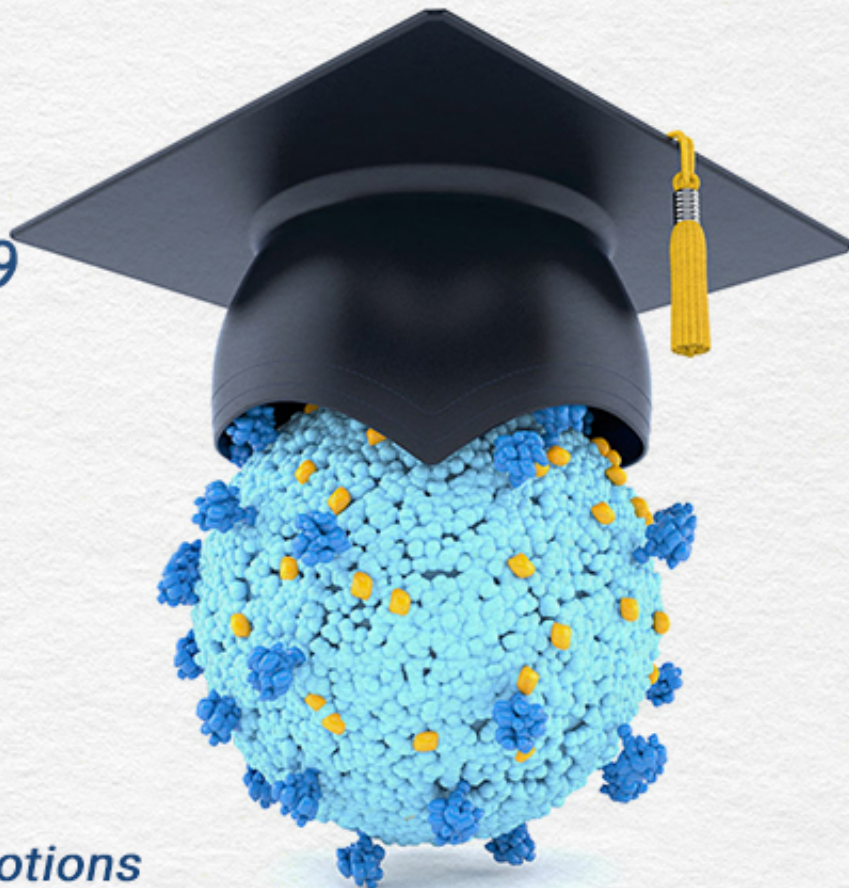
Be a Part of History

Homemade is Better

Perfect Steak

Fly on the Wall

Convocation & COVID-19



Plus:

Editorial: A Caveat

*Four Writing Tips for Fake Emotions
and much more!*

CONTENTS

The Voice's interactive Table of Contents allows you to click a story title to jump to an article. Clicking the bottom right corner of any page returns you here. Some ads and graphics are also links.

Features

COVID-19 Memory Archive Project	4
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Articles

Editorial: <i>A Caveat</i>	3
Escapism through Literature	19

Columns

Fly on the Wall: <i>Convocation as Praxis</i>	5
The Creative Spark: <i>Four Writing Truths about Faking Emotions</i>	9
The Not-So Starving Student: <i>How to Host Healthy BBQ</i>	11
The Fit Student: <i>Vaccines and Why I Hate Them</i>	12
Homemade is Better: <i>Perfect Steak</i>	18
Dear Barb: <i>Lost Children</i>	21

News and Events

AU-Thentic Events	7
Student Sizzle	22
Scholarship of the Week	22
AUSU Update	26

Comic

Poet Maeve: <i>Tactical Resources</i>	22
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Even I don't look at it, it's
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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

A Caveat

Karl Low



I feel like I need to preface this issue saying that I don't agree with everything that gets published in *The Voice Magazine*. These articles represent the views of the writers, not of me, and certainly not that of AUSU or AU. But at the same time, *The Voice Magazine* isn't my magazine. It's the magazine of the extended student community of AU. So if something is reasonably well written, and makes a reasonable effort at a fair telling on an issue (which doesn't mean it's a balanced telling, life often isn't balanced, and our stories shouldn't try to pretend it is when it's not) then I'm probably going to publish it.

So it is with this week's *The Fit Student*. Marie Well looks at the issue of vaccines more from the point of what it can mean for society to demand people take vaccines. She notes her concerns with how certain provinces tie being able to do things like attend school to being vaccinated and comes down on the side of freedom of choice.

It's something that made me uncomfortable when I first read it. I don't like to think of mandatory vaccines as taking away freedom of choice. I'm all for freedom of choice, right? But with in freedom comes responsibility—the responsibility not to use that freedom in a way that would endanger others. This is especially relevant right now. When and if they develop a COVID-19 vaccine, there is a very strong likelihood that they will make the taking of it mandatory for most people, at least for those who don't have a good medical reason to avoid taking it.

And even though many of us might never experience significant effects if we catch COVID-19, I'll be among those strongly arguing that such a vaccine be made mandatory, be made our duty to our elders and to the immunocompromised among us – that we all get vaccinated so that they don't have to suffer the disease. And yes, that will probably mean forcing some people who have fears about vaccination, which is horrible. Even though those fears are totally unfounded according to medical science, that doesn't make forcing people to suffer them any better.

But there's a bigger picture, and that involves the actual physical safety of some members of society over the preference of others. To me, there's no contest which way that decision should go. You can endanger yourself all you want, but when our choices start to endanger others, that's when we cease to have choices.

As a final note, I can't finish this editorial without mentioning the actions going on surrounding race, police brutality, and the protests and riots that are springing up across the continent and around the world.

I'm seeing the rise again of the Black Lives Matter, and with it, see the rise of some of those who try to claim that All Lives Matter is a better slogan, among them my mother. But I don't see how anybody can say in good conscience that all lives matter until black lives do. #BlackLivesMatter. Let's deal with that issue first. It's well past time.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Karl'.



Working from home means tracking your dog following sunbeams

COVID-19 MEMORY ARCHIVE

Announcing an initiative to archive
our collective and individual
experiences

COVID-19 Memory Archive Project An Interview with AU Archivist Karen Langley

Natalia Iwanek

W Historical societies, museums, and governments often use archives as a way to “preserve historical material and make them available for use.” And while in the past archives have been predominantly physical, in recent times, archives are increasingly becoming digitalized.

In particular, Athabasca University’s Thomas A. Edge Archives and Special Collections, the official repository for AU’s Archival collections, has recently begun the COVID-19 Memory Archive Project as a way to commemorate individual and shared experiences during the COVID-19 pandemic. AU students, staff, and alumni, as well as Athabasca residents, are encouraged to submit all types of digital materials, including photographs, artwork, audio or video recordings, blog posts or journal entries, poetry, essays, short stories, screenshots, memes, gifs, oral histories, and social media posts.

The Voice recently reached out those involved to the learn more about the project, culminating in an interview with AU Archivist Karen Langley, who along with Archives Assistant Jesse Carson, leads the project.

Archivist Karen Langley revealed that the project was inspired by Brock University’s initiative, when Archives Assistant Jesse Carson “thought it would be worthwhile to see if we could do something similar.” Langley reveals that this project has not been externally funded, and is solely the result of her own work, the work of Carson, as well as certain AU folks, including the Student and Academic Services team.

She stated, “The purpose of the project is to collect people’s stories and experiences during COVID-19, to create an online exhibit of them, and to preserve them for researchers in the future.” In particular, “[t]he main goal is to collect digital submissions that are reflective of people’s experiences during COVID-19. We also have a survey that we would like folks to fill out that asks some general questions about their experiences. People can submit multiple digital items, and/or complete a survey.”

Although the Archive Project is not taking physical submissions, they are “looking for pretty much anything [digital] that anyone can think of: poetry, audio/video, favorite COVID-19 memes, stories, anecdotes, artwork, etc.” Submissions will be accepted for a year, with the possibility of an extended the current deadline if material is still coming in.

Although the main goal is to preserve artifacts, the Archive Project will also be putting together an exhibit of submissions in the future. Langley stated, “We are in the early stages of planning the exhibit. We hope to allow folks to search the submissions based on the type of item submitted, and other various criteria to be determined. We also hope to have a map that will show generally where submissions are coming from, and will likely send out submissions on social media (Facebook/Twitter) over time as well.”

On a final note, Langley revealed, “We hope that folks will realize how important it is to preserve everyone’s experiences during this time, and ask that they let everyone they know about the project. And if they have any seniors or folks in their family that do not have ready access to a computer, to help them fill out a survey or submit an item. We think this is a great project that families can do together while they are spending most of their time at home.”

For AU students, staff, or alumni or Athabasca residents who wish to participate, please visit the [Covid-19 Project website](#) or contact archives@athabascau.ca.

Further inspiration can be seen at Brock University’s [COVID-19 In Niagara](#), Duke Kunshan University’s [The COVID-19 Memory Archival Project](#), and [A Journal of the Plague Year: An Archive of Covid19](#), a collaborative effort by various post-secondary institutions.

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 Convocation As Praxis

Jason Sullivan



Fear is a fickle thing to which the famous 4 F’s of the brain’s hypothalamus do scanty justice. Besides fight, food, fucking, and flight, limbic fear also propels us over mountainous humps we’d have hitherto imagined as insurmountable. So it was with trepidation that I took the stage along with my graduating cohort at the AU convocation of 2014. Presently my chair neighbour asked of me a harmless, yet utterly sublime question: “So what are you going to be when you grow up?” As the saying goes, we’re never more than four feet from a spider and, surely, never more than a thought away from pondering the big arcing narrative that is our lives. Fear of public

events thus melded with a broader fear of the future.

What indeed to be, and who! We both laughed; moments like these come around rarely in life. Weddings, funerals, passport photos, graduations, mug shots perhaps; times when time itself stands still as recorded by technology and our minds. These are times when we are wont to ask ourselves what we are fighting and loving for as the years slide by, and to which peaks and goals do we turn our faces as we overcome social anxiety in a big public place. Small moments matter the most sometimes, and the big events, like convocation, provide wonderful social refraction of the mirror-lens that illuminates the greater picture that is our life.

Narrative Analysis: To Ask A Question is to Draw Forth the Lifeblood of Our Life's Truths

With that question about growing up, the rubber was hitting the road for me as an inchoate social scientist; clearly, the meaning of attending convocation was an example narrative analysis writ large. As one methodology textbook puts it, "while there is little consensus on what narrative analysis entails, at the very least it entails a sensitivity to: the connections in people's accounts of past, present, and future events and states of affairs; people's sense of their place within those events and situations; the stories they generate about them; and the significance of context for the unfolding of events and people's sense of their role within them" (Bryman et al, 271). Significant context, indeed.

I'd venture that the whole of my AU journey so far would connote a differing hue had I not crowned my achievement with attendance, bum in seat style, at convocation. This was especially true for me because 15 years earlier I'd picked up an extra shift at work rather than attend my high school graduation. In short, convocation is a golden opportunity to put into practice participant observation such that we truly feel something about our studies that may have hitherto eluded us. Me, I realized how proud I was of my academic progress as a framework in which my life had evolved for the better.

Home is Where Your Academic Heart Is; At AU We're All Albertans At Some Level

Convocation went off without a hitch; we each received our diploma with blushes and smiles and the huge prime rib buffet afterward was epic. They say free food tastes best but, really, a repast celebrating hard fought success knows no equal. We might as well have all been victorious members of Alexander the Great's army. I'd been cautioning over-simplifying simpletons from back East and from the Wet Coast to love Alberta for years. Not only because respecting the Other beats wallowing in bird seed granola and stewed sanctimony but because Alberta really IS tasty, because Alberta really does make great gravy, and because Alberta really does bring the beef while limiting the cloying, all too Canadian, excesses of passive aggression. Because Alberta makes eye-contact, we all oughta love the province; overcoming social anxiety is thus a part of encountering, seance-like, our flatlander within. And attending convocation puts our social science skills to the test.

For distance education students, apprehension is often a big draw for enrolling at AU in the first place. Yet, I'd argue, attending convocation circles the wagons of our solitary academia. And, hey, our University graduation might be our last kick at the old hat and gown bucket; so if you can possibly swing it head out to Athabasca and check out the festivities. This year might be a write off thanks to the Kung Flu kick of COVID-19 but there's always 2021 and years thereafter. And even if your graduation number's not up the festivities are well worth the travel; I'd attend every year if work and the bajillion mile drive didn't get in the way. But really, that's an excuse, and AU success is about just saying 'no' to excuses.

Clarity of Life's Vision at Convocation

The what-felt-like-millions of eyes in the audience clarified my vision of past and future selves. Like at the tiny Cricket Road forest access near Castlegar, where we stopped for a pee hike on the

way home to the sunny Okanagan, the whole mountainous landscape between BC and Alberta seemed to pixelate into one big Manet painting of some day at the beach. In such magical moments where our past crawls away to burned out synapses and our future morphs into a blurry mezzotint realm of equally dubious stereoscopic uncertainty, the world becomes what it is for us and we become who we truly are.

And up there on stage, in our skin clothes and under those fratty robes, we realize that our life is the only one we live by and that there be precious few moments per decade that will stand out in such shining glory. Like the Hindu god Ganesh trumpeting a final farewell as time circles around the cosmos in an endless sidereal cycle, only to dip below the horizon as our personal present incarnation flickers into a penumbra twilight, convocation is where we say goodbye to another facet of the enigma that is our identity so that we may embrace a new and shinier iteration of self.

Convocation: Where Our Past Self Meets Our Future Self

Rare though those these meetings of our history and our future are, the memories thereof imprint upon the grand edifice of a life well lived. In the instant that I considered who I wanted to be in the future, and it's ontological implications for my overall apparatus of personal identity, I realized just how blessed I was to be raised to believe that I can, at a cosmic level, become anything I want to be when I grow up. That is, if I am willing to work hard enough and/or like a dog, and am willing to overcome setbacks along the way. Most of all, though, to have passion for life and learning is what stands any of us in good stead. And that's perhaps the greatest thing I learned from the speech of my elders and the speakers at convocation. Their words of encouragement clarified themselves in my response to the graduate in the seat next to me. My off-the-cuff answer hasn't changed with deeper thought: "I dunno but I wanna have fun along the way" I said. From there, in that moment, I maybe then made my staple joke about planning to run an unlicensed secular monastery specializing in Alcohol Based Counselling (ABC for short). But the details are less important; often to ask a question is to answer it, and not knowing is the key to the magnificence of inquiry itself.

To achieve a pleasant life outcome may well be to acknowledge how we want to feel in the future. Studies show that graduates of an Arts program, any arts program, be it art history or psychology, lead a happier life regardless of income. A recent Gallup poll question asked respondents to assess the statement "at work, I have the opportunity to do what I do best every day". As it turned out, "humanities graduates were more likely than engineering graduates to answer in the affirmative."

AU-thentic Events Upcoming AU Related Events

Bannock and a Movie June Edition - Two Spirit Stories

June 1 to June 30

Online

Hosted by AU

news.athabascau.ca/events/bannock-and-a-movie-two-spirit-stories

Register through above link

MBA for Executives Webinar

Wed, June 10, 12:00 to 1:00 pm MDT

Online

Hosted by AU Faculty of Business

news.athabascau.ca/events/mba-for-executives-webinar-20200610

Register through above link

The Grad Lounge

Fri, June 12, 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-june-12

No pre-registration necessary; access through above link

All events are free unless otherwise noted.

So much for that useless piece of paper that the hoi polloi sometimes affixes to our Arts education! (Bradburn, 2018 and Jaschick, 2018). Indeed, much of the paradox of higher learning lies in the way it challenges our core conception that we must learn about the things that we will directly ‘do something’ with.

Like internet videos of people arguing over trifles in the ‘real world’ the problem may lie with the fact that we believe that we must always do something ‘practical’ with what we learn and that, somehow, we are never outside of our very real human context. Rare is the moment where we question these core conceptions about meaning and place. The ecologist Daniel B. Botkin notes that life lives in folds of meaning and metaphor; “at the surface were the activities of society...Underneath these was a layer of belief, myth, and assumption, of symbol and metaphor: the clock, the tree and the stars” (Botkin, vii). In the science of nature, as in the arts of our hearts, we each become the best possible models of our future selves in the present when we remember that it is we who write the interpretive script of our own lives. And that fact was never so clear to me as it was as I sat at my own convocation and considered what I was going to be when I grew up. Luckily, ontology breeds a certain promiscuity and there are no wrong answers to such a question.

An Exit Rejoinder

Henry Miller summarized the value of knowing why and how we envision our future selves to be; life’s about running toward the light rather than away from it, of dreaming as a way of being rather than a desperate escape or hopeful obsequiousness to context. In the shadow of the end of WWII, he wrote:

“The struggle against is as valiant as the struggle for; the difference lies in the fact that the one who struggles against has his back to the light. He is fighting his own shadow. It is only when this shadow play exhausts him, when finally he falls prostrate, that the light which sweeps over him can reveal to him the splendors which he had mistaken for phantoms. This is the surrender of pride and egotism which is demanded of all, great or small.” (Miller, 138). Just knowing what we don’t know about our future makes it all the more delicious; likewise, having a goal that is thematic as much as specific is delightful in itself. There’s less to fear than we think in life because in the end, wherever we go and whoever we grow into, there we are.

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



The Creative Spark

Four Writing Truths About Faking Emotions

Marie Well



What if I said your secrets, denials, and suppressed and faked emotions are treasures? Yes, treasures! Weird, hey? But I believe your secrets and denials exist to help you grow. Yes, they could help you grow into the most stunning swan. Thus, I've come up with four weird but wise tips to help you realize your gorgeous soul.

Weird wisdom #1: Things go better with suppressed emotions.

Fiction-writer Rayne Hall says, "Suppressed emotions: When a character doesn't like what she feels, she may deny those feelings to herself, or she may consciously fight them. Consciously suppressed emotions: if she's conscious of the feelings she wants to suppress, she'll seek to put a different, acceptable emotion on top. She may do this with self talk, for example: 'I can do this.' 'Ghosts don't exist.' 'I know that my husband is faithful.' She may also deliberately change her posture, tone of voice or facial expression, mimicking the body language of the emotion she wants to feel" (35%).

Suppressing emotions may be healthy, I believe, when the emotions would otherwise fuel negativity. I believe we should shed the negative emotions we feel. Replace them with love, kindness—anything beautiful. After all, your true essence should be goodness.

We can do more than suppress negative emotions; we can transcend them. I believe we suppress negative emotions—and feel guilty—when we mislead ourselves to believe negatives identify us. But we should not be defined by the negatives we feel or think. We are truly defined by how we respond to them. And I think our truest self is only during those moments when we respond in a healthy manner. A healthy response just takes embracing your true essence, which I believe is pure love. Anything short of pure love is not reflective of your true essence.

For instance, I've stopped feeling resentment toward others. I did this by seeing what I may have done to contribute to any issue. This feels so freeing because it removes resentment and replaces it with the thought, "How can I do better next time?" That's a growth mindset.

Rayne Hall says, "For consciously suppressed emotions, combine the body language cue with self-talk. The self-talk can be in direct or indirect speech, but keep it short. Mary squared her shoulders. 'Someone is bound to give me a job.'" (42%).

Self-talk is controlled by your free will. Let your true essence—pure love—guide you.

Weird wisdom #2: Denial may be good for your health.

Rayne Hall describes denial: "When a character denies what he feels, he is not even consciously aware of this emotion. This poses a challenge for the writer. I recommend treating this with a delicate touch. The clues you give the reader have to be so subtle that they're barely there. For the [point of view] character, give the barest hint of a physical sensation - a body part itching, a

stiffening of the neck, a faint headache, a slight discomfort in the seating position. You can also show a stronger physical sensation, and have the [point of view] character attribute it to a different cause” (36%).

If we are in denial, chances are a negative thought or action has grown weeds in us. We must dig the weeds and roots out, replacing them with higher emotions. That is called free will, a will which is intended to free our minds from grudges, worries, and other unwholesome thoughts.

Weird wisdom #3: It's healthy to stomp out secret emotions by flexing your heart.

Rayne Hall talks about “secret emotions: A character may be comfortable with his own feelings, but not want others guess them. Perhaps the display of emotion would not be appropriate, or it would offend the other person. The best way to show this is with 'corrected' body language. The character reacts with facial expression or gesture that comes natural in the situation, then catches what he's doing and stops it at once. Here are three examples for this technique: John learns that his boss's child is terminally ill and slowly dying. Feeling deep compassion, John's immediate reaction is to reach out and give the man a hug. But he immediately checks himself. Hugging another man, especially the boss, is not appropriate, so he stops the movement and takes a step back” (38%).

Secret emotions based on ill will poison the soul. But secret emotions based on moral love or empathy seem harmless, even charming. For instance, if you have a secret longing for another man's wife, that's poison. But if you want to hug another man because you feel for his suffering, that's positive.

Rayne Hall says, “Another way to show secret emotions is with the character's voice. The voice may rise or drop in pitch or volume. Since people try not to give away their feelings with their voices, they may clear their throats or cough a little before they speak. Readers will understand these cues, and wait for the time when the character does act on his emotions, for example, when John, unrestrained by army discipline, punches the bullying sergeant in the face, or when he hugs another man regardless of convention” (38%).

Clearing your throat is a sign of blocked communication, according to the yogic world of chakras. Once, when I held back a tiny truth, my throat ached for a week, constricting more each day. Once I told the truth, my throat stopped aching. If I had lived by my highest principles, I wouldn't have had a sore, aching throat in the first place.

But some things are best left unsaid and replaced, going forward, with your truest essence: pure love. But if you clear your throat a lot, it could be a sign you might need to curb a secret emotion.

Weird wisdom #4: Faked feelings cue you to what's good.

Rayne Hall touches on “faked feelings: A character may need to fake an emotion he doesn't really feel. The reasons for this can be noble or despicable. Perhaps he must pretend to admire the cruel dictator, to save himself and his family from execution. Maybe he pretends to love his aunt, so she'll name him heir to her fortune. When my characters pretend emotions they don't truly feel, I have fun writing this. My favourite technique is to create contradictions. The character's words claim a feeling, but his body language gives him away. Perhaps Mary tells John that she loves him, but she doesn't meet his eyes and leans slightly away from him” (39%).

When we fake healthy emotions, we stumble on opportunities to grow. Those positive emotions reflect healthy ways of responding—ways we should nurture within ourselves. If we can train our thoughts to express those positive emotions naturally, we've grown.

According to Rayne Hall, “A more subtle variant is to have two body language cues contradict each other. The character deliberately uses postures and movements that convey his faked emotions, but his body produces symptoms that are outside his control. Let's say Mary waits in the reception area to be called in for a job interview. Knowing that she will be watched, she pretends serene confidence. She manages to keep her shoulders relaxed and to hold her hands still on her lap... but sweat trickles down her temples, and her legs constantly cross and uncross” (40%).

If Mary could've trained her thoughts to achieve a gracious and natural confidence, surely she'd have grown. There is not a single beautiful trait you can't develop for yourself. You can be as inwardly beautiful as a saint or a sunrise. You can be as loving as an affectionate cat. You can be anything stunning. That's because, once again, I believe your true nature is pure love.

What's more, your secrets and denials are there to help you grow even more beautiful.

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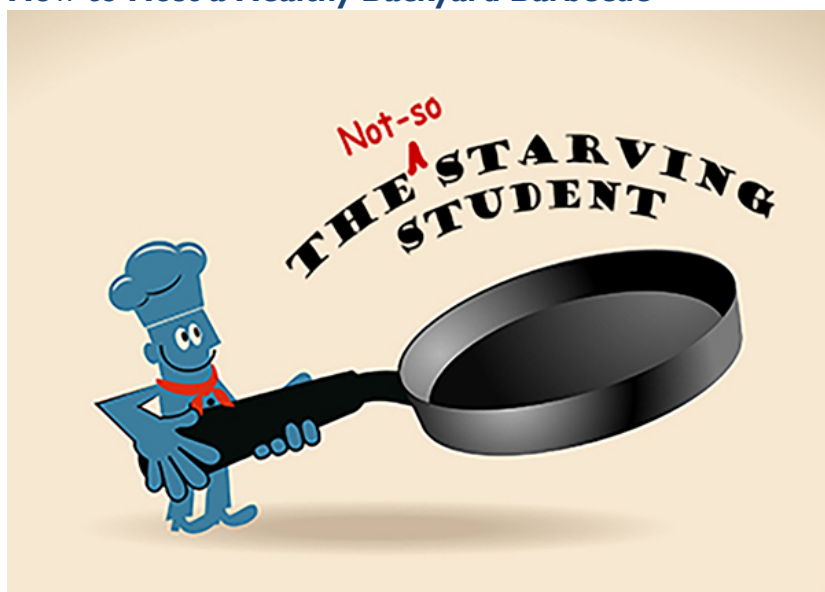
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The Not-So Starving Student

How to Host a Healthy Backyard Barbecue

Xin Xu



Every year I host a backyard barbecue for my family, but this year I've had to enjoy the entire feast myself. For those who are working or studying from home, backyard barbecues can be a great way to enjoy the company of you and your loved ones. With the current loosening of public health quarantine measures, AU students and their loved ones can take some time to relish in the good weather in the comfort of their backyards. As soon as I realized that this year's annual barbecue would look significantly different than last year's due to sanitary restrictions, I've created some handy adjustments that still allow you to host events.

Wear gloves when cooking to prevent transmission of pathogens

Not only is this tip handy for grocery shopping but cooking with single-use gloves helped me to ensure I was not transmitting any fomites. Fomites are objects or materials that may carry infection such as droplets of virus or bacteria on our hands. Furthermore, I found that the grease that typically splatters over your hands while grilling was no longer an issue.

Practicing public health recommendations of staying at least two meters or six feet apart from dinner guests

This is particularly important despite the recent easing of public health measures. On the lawn, we sat in a circle whereby each member stayed at least two meters away from other guests. Despite the distance, my guests found that they enjoyed the ability to feel safe while also being in the presence of others. Sitting in a circle also helped my guests to feel more intimate as if in a sharing circle that brought them back to their childhood days.

Keeping the annual barbecue to only five members (two of whom are housemates)

Keeping a small number of people at this gathering helps lower the risk of transmission. Given that many of my family members stayed at home during the quarantine in the past month, it gave each of us an assurance that the risk of transmission was lowered, albeit not eliminated. This has always been a personal struggle for me because keeping the gathering small meant that I had to narrow down my picks for individuals to invite. However, at the same time, I found that the smaller gatherings made guests feel more intimate and welcome.

Ensuring only one person handles the food

This task can be a challenge especially when multiple members of my family are oftentimes engaged in grilling and seasoning the food. In my family, barbecues are a communal event where each member actively contributes to the food preparation. However, this year we had to make some slight changes. Particularly, I was the sole individual grilling and seasoning our meal. The change was at first puzzling to my mother who is accustomed to being a micromanaging head chef in the kitchen. The changes however also made us realize that it can be significantly more efficient to have just a single cook in the kitchen. Moreover, less collaboration also meant less conflicts on the topic of cooking techniques.

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



The Fit Student

Vaccines and Why I Hate Them

Marie Well



I don't mind vaccines. In fact, some might be crucial. But I won't ever request a vaccine again, and I refuse to have one forced upon me. You see, for four years, I had a compromised immune system. I felt ghastly sick. One forced vaccine of who-knows-what may have killed my hopes for health. So, I speak for those of us who want the choice. I speak for those of us who don't have strong immune systems—those of us who feel a vaccine could bring on suffering.

I speak for my friend who is now bedridden, so sick she can barely walk. She won't let anyone vaccinate her, and I don't blame her.

This is not about extreme leftism or far right movements. This, for some, is about survival. If you've ever felt so sick that you knew death was nearing, you may identify. "Immunizations are not mandatory in Canada; however, in Ontario, and New Brunswick, proof of immunization is required for children and adolescents to attend school. In these same provinces, exceptions to immunizations can be made only for medical (can require a note from a healthcare provider) or ideological reasons," says *Immunize Canada*. I don't agree with revoking rights and freedoms to coerce parents into accepting vaccines for their children. Thankfully there is an opt out based on ideological reasons. I hope that never changes.

I worry about the possibility of vaccines becoming mandatory. What's more, I worry about rights and freedoms being taken away for those who don't get vaccines—like the right to go to school, the right to travel, or the right to attend public events. I'm not saying that's necessarily the trend, but revoking the right to attend school doesn't sit well with me.

I chose to get a vaccine during grad school. The vaccine caused boils to grow on my face. I began feeling ill, which impacted my studies. So, I discontinued the shots.

If I had gotten the vaccine when I had what I suspect was chronic disease—when sunlight or my friend's voice caused me physical pain—I think I would have plunged downhill. I believe it would have left me bedridden in the dark, unable to tolerate light or sound. That's the direction I was heading.

Here in Alberta, I presently have the right to reject a vaccine, but I want to ensure this remains my right. I would never want a vaccine forced on me, especially given my prior immunocompromised state. And I certainly wouldn't want rights and freedoms revoked if I didn't comply.

We still need a good HIV vaccine, but who wants a forced one?

The Open University states, "Despite decades of effort, medical science has so far been unable to produce effective vaccines against a number of important infectious diseases, including HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted infections (although trials of several candidate vaccines are underway)" (Infection & Immunity, 69%).

If you had a compromised immune system, a forced vaccine, say against HIV, could feel terrifying. Vulnerable populations should never be forced into vaccines. Nor should they be coerced by the removal of their rights and freedoms. What's more, I don't think anyone should be forced to take a vaccine. There are healthier ways to boost the immune system, preventative ways, such as through a vegetable and fiber-rich diet, exercise, and a toxin-free lifestyle.

I'll take my chances and say no to convulsions.

The Open University says, "Of even greater concern is that some children experience a negative reaction to a vaccine, most often inflammation around the injection site and/or a mild fever lasting a day or two, but rare instances of more severe reactions such as convulsions sometimes occur" (Infection & Immunity, 71%).

If it's giving me convulsions, my body clearly doesn't want it. But I never get convulsions eating the greens from a carrot top I've grown for weeks in a plate of water. I'll never get convulsions from running 100 meters in the warm sun followed by ten burpee push-ups. That's the natural medicine I want, and I feel I should have that choice.

My landlady, in her early 80s, had an influenza vaccine. She was sure it gave her the worst flu of her life. "Never again!" she shouted. But on the flipside, a friend of mine never got a tetanus shot and wound up having an infected finger cut off.

So, vaccines have benefits and drawbacks. I prefer my vaccines to be chosen, and never forced. I chose a tetanus vaccine in the past. I won't ever have another. You see, I struggled for four years to free myself of an undiagnosed chronic disease. I am sitting on a fine line between health and relapse.

A Silenced Narrative?

I saw the documentary called *Vaxxed* on Amazon. A week later, I read an article that said anti-vaccine products were being censored on Amazon. While I respect that vaccines can play a great role in people's health, I disagree with censoring views. It's important that people get exposed to more than just one narrative on the risks of mandatory vaccines. Some of those narratives are from people with compromised immune systems—people like me and my bedridden friend.

I saw a number of documentaries and read some books that talked about researchers views being suppressed when they don't jive with the mainstream narrative. But who is the mainstream, I wonder? According to the Open University, a "major challenge is parental opposition to vaccination because of concerns about vaccine safety. Some parents are understandably anxious about taking a healthy child to be given a vaccine derived from infectious agents" (Infection & Immunity, 71%).

While I enjoy the lifestyle I've gained from taking medication, I wouldn't want a drug forced on me. And I wouldn't want rights and freedoms revoked if I didn't comply.

Why terrorist attacks struck polio vaccinators, and why choice matters.

The Open University says that "the myth that vaccination is a Western plot to sterilise Muslim children has deterred parents in northern Nigeria, Pakistan and Afghanistan from allowing their children to be vaccinated against polio Terrorist attacks have occurred against polio vaccination teams in all three countries – the only remaining locations where polio had not been eradicated by the WHO target of 2015" (Infection & Immunity, 71%).

I don't think it's right to dismiss outright the view that some Muslims might hold on vaccines. And while I don't believe vaccines sterilize people, if the powers forced a vaccine on me, I would be horrified. Because I do believe a vaccine could cause me to relapse into a chronic disease. I'll go with healthy, natural options instead.

Is the jury out whether vaccines cause autism?

The Open University says, "false claims in 1998 that the MMR vaccine caused autism led to a sustained fall in vaccinations in the UK, followed by a significant rise in measles cases and, to a lesser extent, mumps" (Infection & Immunity, 72%).

But I personally believe the jury is still out on that one. I argue that mandatory vaccines for children could be contributing to the rise in autism over the years. Whether this view has merit, anti-vaccine parents, too, may hold this opinion. I see this chart on the spike in cases of autism, and although whether it correlates with vaccines is not evidenced here, it's a suspicion some anti-vaccine parents hold. I hold the same view, although I haven't seen evidence of this correlation proven. Such evidence is hard to come by. And there are quite a few studies saying the link doesn't exist, but isn't everybody unique?

One website shows how the number of recommended vaccines has increased from 4 in 1940 to 14 in 2019. Might this shed light on a potential correlation? It's hard to tell.

My challenge to the pharmaceutical companies and agencies pushing vaccines is to let the merits speak for themselves. Allow multiple, even opposing, narratives to come to the light. Don't censor and silence opposing views. And most of all, don't force vaccines on those of us with compromised immune systems. And don't revoke basic rights and freedoms from those who don't comply.

I still remember the face of my sick friend as I met her in the mall. She said she finally found the strength to go for a short walk. I told her I came around: I now believed mandatory vaccines were wrong. "Don't get me started," she cried. I looked closer at her and wondered how long she had left. My heart went out to her. And she has a young child at home.

This is a narrative that needs to be heard, for me, for my friend, for the ill, and for those who value their freedom of choice. Might that be you?

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Homemade is Better Perfect Steak

Chef Corey



It is getting nicer outside as summer approaches, and warm weather means its time to get your grill on! May was the right mix of warm, hot, and fresh, at least for Edmonton it was, but June is finally here. So, for all you home cooks who don't have the confidence to cook a great steak, I'm going to give you a few methods to help you prepare that perfect restaurant-quality steak. But don't be fooled, you're going to need to get practice and perfect your style. And different cuts of meat require different finished cooking temperatures.

Let's talk about the variety of meats you can grill. In the beef family, there are striploin, sirloins, t-bones, tenderloin, baseball cuts, porterhouse, skirt steak, flank steak, and even rib-eyes. Many parts of a steer can be for steak and come in many different grades. Most of what you might see in the supermarket is grade AA or higher: AAA. You might also see flashy names like Kobe, Wagyu, and Angus. "How do these all fit into cooking the perfect steak?" you might ask. Well, some of it does matter, and some of it doesn't.

The grade of meat from A to AAA or even Prime is what the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) has determined what that carcass is, based on the fat marbling in the rib eye. The carcass also gets a number grade to it, which is the predicted yield of the said carcass. If you would like more information, visit <https://www.beefresearch.ca/research-topic.cfm/carcass-grading-41>.

The names like Kobe, Wagyu, or Angus are breed names. Kobe is a type of Wagyu beef from Japan. Wagyu is any of the four Japanese breeds of cattle, and Angus is also a breed of cattle. And while these names have started to become used more, they don't make much difference in how to choose. If you want Wagyu beef, and you have a few extra bucks (and I mean a lot of extra dollars), you'd be getting excellent meat. Angus is also a good grade, and again if you want to pay a little more for it, you'll get a good steak. But they are marketing names that sell meat. You don't need to buy them if you want a good steak.

Good steak-grilling is about understanding the doneness you desire as it relates to the type of cut you choose. So, when you go to a steak house, and you read that they will only cook certain steaks to medium-rare, it's because that is the best taste you'll get out of that steak. If you prefer a well-done steak, you should look for the cuts that are used the least by the animal. Tenderloin is one of those that could be cooked to well-done and still taste good. The fillet is already tender, so overcooking it won't make it a piece of shoe leather. It's also more expensive, because of where it is in the animal. Striploin should be cooked to medium at most. The t-bone and porterhouse are the tenderloin and striploin separated by a t shaped bone, which is part of the vertebrae. These steaks are both tender and can handle a longer cooking time. Rib-eyes and sirloins should cook for a shorter time to medium-rare doneness.

So how do you cook a steak to the doneness you want? There are a couple of tricks they teach you in culinary school or working in a restaurant. One way is to use the muscle in your hand closest to your thumb and wrist. Starting with an open hand, when you feel that ball of muscle, that is the feeling of blue rare to uncooked. Then bringing your first finger and thumb together and poking that muscle you get rare. The second finger to thumb is medium-rare, the third finger is medium, and the fourth finger is medium-well, a closed fist is well done.

That is one method. Another method is by looking at the colour of the juices as it cooks. At the start, your steak releases some clear liquid, and this is blue rare. It will then turn red, which is rare, then clear, red, clear. Each change approximates doneness. This method is probably the more intensive one; it relies on you watching your steak. Which, if you have your favourite beverage in your hand and it's a beautiful day outside, is an okay way to spend your time.



As I showed before in the burger recipe, your grill lines come from patience. Once the meat releases itself, turn it 90 degrees to get that diamond shape. Watch for grill marks, then flip it over and keep going.

The other thing I do is seasoning. I sometimes use Montreal steak spice, but salt and pepper are also good friends! Half a tsp of Kosher salt per side is okay and get some pepper on that as well! My Perfect Steak recipe is for a striploin steak; it's fundamental, and, with practice, you too can make steak the way you want it!

Perfect Steak

Ingredients

4 striploin steaks, cut about 1" thick
4 tsp Kosher Salt
Ground Black pepper

Directions

- 1) Make sure your steaks are fresh. If they were frozen, thaw them in the fridge for two days. Then bring it to room temperature.
- 2) Heat your grill or oven if you don't have one. Broil is your oven setting.
- 3) Salt and pepper both sides of the steak. The salt will pull moisture out, but not enough to make your steak dried out.
- 4) Cook it on one side, for about 2 minutes. Once the steak releases from the grill without much effort, turn it 90 degrees. Cook for another 1 – 2 minutes. Flip it and cook for about 2 minutes. Again, once it lets go on its own, then turn it 90 degrees.
- 5) Cook it until you're happy with its doneness. Medium rare should be about the temperature if you follow the directions above. But thicker steaks will take longer, and thinner steaks will take shorter.
- 6) Once cooked, cover the steaks with tin foil and rest them a minimum of 5 minutes. The resting allows the juices to relax and remain evenly distributed in the meat giving it its moist texture.
- 7) Now throw those tongs over your shoulder like a boss and dig in!
- 8) You can add vegetables if you want, it's probably a good idea.
- 9) As a bonus, if there is extra steak left, that means steak and eggs in the morning!



Chef Corey is a student in business management who first graduated from NAIT's Culinary Arts Program in 2007



Student Sizzle — AU's Hot Social Media Topics

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



AthaU Facebook Group

Miranda seeks advice on testing her laptop with ProctorU; many helpful suggestions in the thread. Michelle posts a link to the AU Students app, which leads to a number of students raising issues they've encountered using the app. New student Lauren has questions about course structure and whether there is a study guide for each course.

Other posts include how to exam scheduling, satisfy a prerequisite, phone quizzes, financial aid, permitted items during exams, Access to Students with Disabilities (ASD), and changing a course before the start date.

Twitter

@AthabascaU tweets: "Have a youth in your life ages 14-21 who could use some advice on how to learn online? LTLO Express was designed to help them transition to study online. <https://bit.ly/2AoEykk> #OnlineLearning #LearningAtHome."

@aulibarchives tweets: "Can't seem to use the library to find resources you need? Visit our Discover Research Guide and let us help walk you through the steps and find a recording of our Discover webinar: <https://libguides.athabascau.ca/Discover> #AULibrary #DistanceEd."

Scholarship of the Week

Digging up scholarship treasure for AU students.

Scholarship name: The Cover Guy 7th Annual Scholarship

Sponsored by: The Cover Guy

Deadline: July 1, 2020

Potential payout: \$1000

Eligibility restriction: Applicants must be students currently enrolled in, or going to be enrolled in, a program at a university, college, or trade school in Canada or the U.S. for the upcoming school year.

What's required: An email with contact and academic info, an explanation of why you should be considered for the award, along with a 500-1000 article related to hot tubs.

Tips: Read the Eligibility Requirements section carefully for information about what your application should include.

Where to get info: www.thecoverguy.com/en-ca/the-cover-guy-annual-scholarship/



Escapism Through Literature

Magical Realism and the Latin American Boom

Natalia Iwanek



English majors and voracious readers alike are well versed in literature's many benefits. From escaping unbearable realities to uncovering startling truths to confronting our deepest fears, literature connects readers with the world by revealing insight into the common human experience. Through themes of time and place, literature reminds us that, despite our uniqueness, our individual experiences can be seen in all corners of the globe, throughout all periods of history.

Our current situation confirms this as the importance of literature has become especially apparent with the increasingly warmer weather. For millions worldwide, including many Canadians, the advent of summer means road trips, days at the beach, weekends camping, and, for some, the privilege of international travel. Sadly, unprecedented times have led to uncertainty, with

the probability of travel options curtailed well into the near future. As many stay inside to protect those most vulnerable in our society, we can turn to literature to escape our disappointment—travelling—if only in our imaginations.

And what better way to travel and escape current reality than with Magical Realism, a genre often associated with what has been termed the “Latin American Boom.” The Latin American Boom was a literary movement that occurred during the politically turbulent 1960s and 1970s. During this time various coups led to socialist governments being replaced by right-wing dictatorships, often supported by the United States. In this period, the work of several writers began to circulate, increasing in popularity worldwide. These included Argentinian, Julio Cortázar; Mexican, Carlos Fuentes; Peruvian, Mario Vargas Llosa; and Colombian, Gabriel García Márquez. In addition, earlier writers, like Argentinian Jorge Luis Borges and Cuban Alejo Carpentier, became increasingly popular, along with Guatemalan, Miguel Ángel Asturias, the first Latin American novelist to win the Nobel Peace Prize in 1967.

Two central novels from the Boom years include *One Hundred Years of Solitude* by Gabriel García Márquez and *Hopscotch* by Julio Cortázar, while other examples include *The Death of Artemio Cruz* by Carlos Fuentes, and *The Time of The Hero* by Mario Vargas Llosa. Closely following the Boom, popular novels included *The Kiss of the Spider Woman* by Argentinian Manuel Puig, as well as those of Cuba's Severo Sarduy, both of whom focused on then-taboo themes of queerness. The Post-Boom 1980s and 1990s featured Vargas Llosa's *The Feast of the Goat*, Fuente's *The Campiagn*, as well as Márquez's *Of Love and Other Demons* and *News of a Kidnapping*.

As one of the defining characteristics of Boom literature, Magical Realism is a genre that “incorporates fantastic or mythical elements into otherwise realistic fiction.” First used in 1925 by German art critic, Franz Roh as “magischer realismus,” which translates to “magic realism,” Alejo Carpentier further developed this concept into “marvelous realism,” after his stay in Paris. Literary critic, Angel Flores, later coined the term “magical realism” in 1955, naming Jorge Luis Borges as the first magical realist. Characteristics of the genre include a realistic setting, magical elements that are often left unexplained and are simply part of the story, unique plot structure, as well as critique of society and Western Imperialism, including politics and the elite.

Specific examples of Magical Realism include the above-mentioned *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, along with *The House of the Spirits* by Chile's Isabel Allende, *The Kingdom of This World* by Cuban, Alejo Carpentier, *Doña Flor and Her Two Husbands* by Brazil's Jorge Amado.

Must read highlights of both pre- Boom, Boom, and Magical Realism literature include:

Alejo Carpentier's *The Kingdom of This World* – Considered one of the most important pre-Boom novels, *The Kingdom* covers the periods before and after the Haitian Revolution, including the rule of King Henri Christophe, from the perspective of Ti Noel (Carpentier viii).

Miguel Ángel Asturias' *The President* – *The President* details life under dictatorship in an unnamed country, believed to be the author's home country (Asturias).

Jorge Luis Borges' *Labyrinths* – *Labyrinths* features a variety of metaphysical and fantastical short stories and essays, on a wide range of topics ranging from time, knowledge, and immortality (Borges xvi).

Julio Cortázar's *Hopscotch* – In one of the first Boom novels, Cortázar tells the tale of Horacio Olivera an Argentinian-expat in Paris and his love affair with and the eventual disappearance of Uruguayan La Maga. The novel can be read in a traditional fashion from start to finish, while a second version can also be read by following a specific sequence indicated by the author (Cortázar).

Isabel Allende's *The House of the Spirits* – Allende's most well-known novel is a saga of the lives of the tragic Trueba family, including Esteban, Clara, their daughter Blanca and her daughter Alba (Allende).

Jorge Amado's *Doña Flor and Her Two Husbands* - A tale of culinary instructor Doña Flor, whose husband Vadinho Guimarães dies during Carnival celebrations and comes back to haunt her when she remarries (Amado).

Gabriel García Márquez's *One Hundred Years of Solitude* and *News of a Kidnapping* – Márquez's *One Hundred Years* follows generations of the Buendía family in isolated Mocando, (Márquez), while *News of a Kidnapping* details ten kidnappings by Pablo Escobar's forces during late 1990s Colombia (Márquez).

Manuel Puig's *The Kiss of the Spider Woman* – Puig's post-Boom novel features the developing relationship between revolutionary Valentin and his cellmate Molina in an Argentinian prison (Puig).

Mario Vargas Llosa's *The Feast of the Goat* – The post- Boom *The Feast of the Goat* recalls the tale of Urania Cabral's return to her home country, the Dominican Republic, as she remembers the days under Rafael Trujillo's dictatorship (Llosa 4).

AU students interested in further information may consider ENGL 458 - The Latin American Novel, which includes readings by Colombia's Gabriel García Márquez, Guatemala's Miguel Angel Asturias, Brazil's Clarice Lispector, Argentina's César Aira, Cuba-Puerto Rico's Mayra Montero, and Cuba's Ernesto "Che" Guevara. In addition, AU offers GLST 308 – Americas: An Introduction to Latin America and the Caribbean and a variety of Spanish courses, from beginners to advanced levels.

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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>.



Dear
Barb

Barbara Godin

Lost Children

Dear Barb:

Hi, I have heard that losing a child is one of the worst traumas in life. I don't have children, but I have had a few relatives and friends who have lost children and they were never the same after the loss. One was a friend who had a miscarriage, one couple lost their daughter at 14 years old and another lost their daughter as an adult. I know these people well, but I did not know what to say to them. I cannot understand their pain, but I would like to try to find a way to be a support for them. It has been over twenty years for my friend that lost her daughter, and she still struggles. When it is her daughter's birthday she stays home and grieves by herself. Her husband seems to be handling it better; he is living his life and rarely speaks of it. My other friend's losses were more recent, so their pain is still very raw. Because of the pain I have seen these people go through, I am almost fearful of having a child in case this was to happen to me. Is my reaction normal? And what can I do to be a support to friends and family who are experiencing this terrible trauma? Looking for advice.

Thanks, Vanessa.

Hi Vanessa:

Thanks for your letter. Losing a child at any age is a painful trauma and very difficult to come to grips with. It is an experience that most of us will never experience or understand unless we have gone through it. The worst thing you can do is tell the grieving parent you know how they feel. You don't. Not unless you have gone through it, and, even then, grief is a personal experience. If you have lost a child you share the feeling of loss, but that's it; after that the experience depends on many other factors—like the age of the child, the circumstances of the death, and whether you knew the death was imminent.

All these factors, plus many more, make the experience of grief unique to that person. Aside from the parents, siblings will also grieve, as well as grandparents, aunts, uncles, and friends. It is important that you remember the child. Parents do not want their child forgotten. So if you talk about the child, don't feel you are going to upset the parents, their child is always in their thoughts and they love to remember them and talk about them. A loss changes someone's life; they can never go back to the way they were before. Don't rush someone through their grief, offer support and a caring ear. You mention your friend having a particularly hard time around their child's birthday, a time when grieving parents imagine what their child would look like or what their lives would have become. Some people still celebrate their child's birthday by having a party, while some celebrate alone. There is no right or wrong, just be there and don't hesitate to talk about their child. They can't pretend it didn't happen and they don't want the rest of the world to either. I believe your reaction is normal and you will come to realize this is not something that happens often; you should not let it prevent you from living your life. You seem like a very caring person. I hope this information was helpful.

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
Tactical Resources

Wanda Waterman



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

IMPORTANT DATES

- June 9: [AU Live Chat Event](#)
- Jun 10: [Deadline to register in a course starting Jul 1](#)
- Jun 15: [Jul degree requirements deadline](#)
- Jun 17: [AUSU Public Council Meeting](#)
- Jun 30: [Deadline to apply for course extension for Jul](#)
- Jul 10: [Deadline to register in a course starting Aug 1](#)



June 2nd, 2020 was observed across social media as #BlackoutTuesday. It was a day for us to sit, listen, and reflect upon the senseless death of George Floyd, at the hands of a Minneapolis police officer, and to understand the lives lost and the larger systemic issues the black community experiences on a daily basis. And while the executive team understands that we will never truly comprehend that lived experience, we are committed to listening, reflecting, and absorbing all we can on the Black Lives Matter movement and other issues that involve systemic discrimination and racism. The Athabasca University Students' Union executive team observed this occasion and dedicated space within ourselves to listen and educate ourselves in order to be an ally to all Black, Indigenous, and People of Colour.

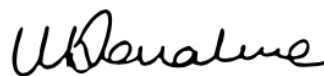
Athabasca University is an open and online university that represents students from all across Canada and the world, including our fellow students from the United States. The Athabasca University Students' Union is against any form of discrimination, including the racism that Black, Indigenous, and People of Colour face on a daily basis. While we watch the protests against systemic discrimination within the United States, there is much work that needs to be done in Canada in order to address systemic discrimination. The AU Students' Union will continue to listen and advocate on human rights issues faced by Athabasca University students, and society as a whole.

Social inclusion is an issue that our team is quite passionate about and one we wish to address over the upcoming year and beyond. Our President, Natasha Donahue, has undertaken steps to begin the process of Indigenization of AUSU to ensure a safe space for Indigenous students to collaborate.

Our Vice President of Finance and Administration, Monique Durette, is working on position policy and advocacy initiatives to ensure students with disabilities are given equitable access to higher education. And finally, our Vice President External and Student Affairs, Stacey Hutchings, continues to advocate and work with the Provincial and Federal governments for improved support and the digital infrastructure needed to ensure all Canadians have access to post-secondary education no matter their location or socio-economic status.

The executive team stands with Black Lives Matter, and we encourage all AU students to [reach out](#) and let us know what we can do to support, understand, and address this critical issue.

In solidarity,



Natasha Donahue
President



Monique Durette
VP Finance & Administration



Stacey Hutchings
VP External & Student Affairs

CLASSIFIEDS

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

THE VOICE

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