



THE VOICE

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Dear Barb in Book Format
Continuing the Advice Tradition

The Ennui of August
A Slim Issue for a Slow Time

The Creative Spark
Five Tips for Musical Writing

Plus:
Knife Knowledge
Beats from the Basement
and much more!



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Even I don't look at it, it's
all on auto.

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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

The Ennui of August

Karl Low



We're in the middle of summer now, and with one of our regular writers running in the AUSU Byelection, others on holidays, this issue of the Voice Magazine is running a little thinner than many.

Also, it seems this week has been rather slow on the news front. Sure, there's the usual rumblings about US politics, and the continual over-arching spectre of COVID-19. The Liberals remain plagued by the WE scandal, the Conservatives remain plagued by having little going for them aside from the WE scandal, the NDP and Greens remain plagued by being third and fourth parties in a FPTP system, so who really cares anyway? It's all led up to a bit of ennui for me this week.

I hope to make up for it next week, however, when I'll be publishing our Q&A with the candidates to help you decide who you're going to want representing you over the next couple of years, years that may prove especially important for AU and AUSU when the actions of the UCP and possible labour disputes at AU are factored in to the normal

considerations of AUSU Council.

But, as usual when this feeling strikes, I find myself wondering if there's room at Athabasca University for a gaming group. It turns out the average age of video gamers in Canada and the average age of AU students aren't that far apart (and it's the students who are younger!) The tentative name I've thought of for the group is the Athabasca University Gamer Society which, while it isn't that original, has the acronym of AUGS, itself a gaming term.

These thoughts have also been brought on by finding myself watching old videos of a group of voice actors involved in a Dungeons & Dragons campaign, and realizing that, with modern technology and the often longer-than-usual student periods for AU students, there's the ability for not only such a game to be had, but to create some long term connections between students across the country. As a side benefit, it would give me a short column to run in *The Voice Magazine* on slow weeks such as this, updating people on what happened in the AUGS campaign.

However, even though it's a slow week, that doesn't mean it's not a week worth reading, just that the read will be quicker than normal, and this week, we feature a book review about a very special book. One written by one of *The Voice Magazine's* own writers, and, even more interesting for me, taken from materials previously published right here between the covers of *The Voice Magazine*.

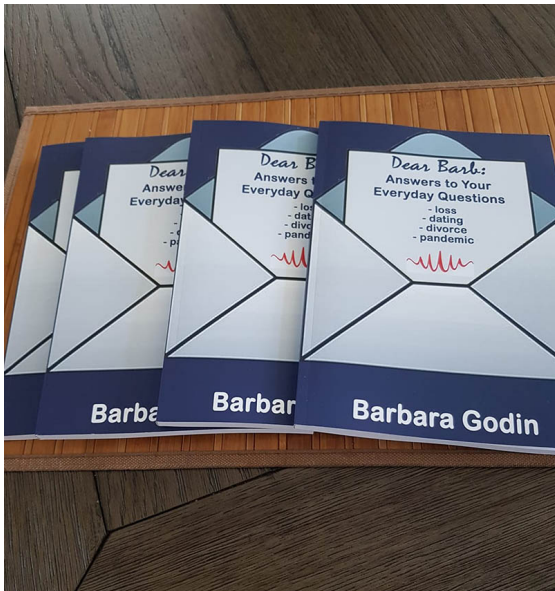
Barb Godin, who you'll recognized from the weekly "Dear Barb" articles, but may be more familiar with from her longer, personal pieces, has taken an assortment of her over 500(!) columns in *The Voice Magazine*, and brought them together in a single volume. You can read the review in our feature article this week from another Barb, Barb Lehtiniemi.

Also this week, we have some writing tricks you can use brought to us by the Creative Spark to help make your writing, whether for your studies or other reasons, stand out a little more, a look back at Ricky Martin's self-titled album, some sharp advice from Chef Corey about knives in the kitchen, scholarships, events, advice, and more! Enjoy the read!

Dear Barb Continues Advice Tradition in Book Format

Barbara Lehtiniemi

The Voice Magazine's own advice columnist enters the book-publishing world



There's a saying, attributed to author and inspirational speaker Regina Brett, that states, "If we threw all our problems in a pile and saw everyone else's we'd grab ours back."

Whether it's *schadenfreude*, self-improvement, or simply gratitude that our own problems are not worse, reading advice columns seems to be a pastime with universal appeal.

"Dear Barb," *The Voice's* own advice column, has been popular with readers since it first appeared in 2003. Barbara Godin, an AU graduate (BA), is the "Barb" behind the column and she also compiles the "Women of Interest" feature for the magazine.

After more than 500 "Dear Barb" columns, Godin has collected a selection of her advice into book format. Her

recently-released *Dear Barb* book is subtitled, *Answers to Your Everyday Questions*.

For her *Dear Barb* book, Godin chose questions about problems relating to many facets of life, including family and relationship issues, health and addiction, work, holidays, pets, and loss. Also included are questions relating to the early days of the 2020 pandemic, making the book timely and relevant.

The book is organized by topic, and each chapter is headed by a meaningful quotation. The table of contents gives a brief description of problems addressed in each chapter, allowing readers a quick route to a relevant issue.

Many of Godin's responses contain some truly insightful comments. Responding to a question about difficulties in a blended family, Godin pithily observes, "The ideal of the *Brady Bunch* is basically that, an ideal, not a reality." (And, I as recall, even the Brady family was not without its conflicts.) Responding to a question about grief for a younger sibling, Godin acknowledges, "When a parent loses a child everyone rallies around and supports them, however, often a sibling's grief is overlooked, and they are left to deal with the loss on their own."

Godin is not a trained psychologist or counsellor. But, as readers of her personal articles in *The Voice* will recognize, Godin has experienced many painful life situations. She seems to have translated those challenges into empathy for others and a sincere desire to help others navigate the sometimes-troubled waters of life. With Godin's thoughtful replies to each problem, the advice seems on par with that you might expect from a trusted friend.

While I didn't relate directly to any specific problem in the book, I certainly found elements of Godin's advice that applied to universal issues: everyone has family or relationships or a bit of stress that could benefit from a dollop of perspective.

As with Godin's weekly column in *The Voice*, I found myself formulating my own advice as I read the submitted question, then seeing how that compared with Godin's. Perhaps there was a bit of *schadenfreude*—pleasure derived by another's misfortune— and definitely gratitude that my collection of problems appears trivial by comparison to those of some others.

Overall, *Dear Barb* is an engaging read, full of useful advice and suggestions on how to deal with all those day-to-day problems that none of us seem exempt from. As with most self-help books, each reader can extract what they find useful. There is much *Dear Barb* advice that has far-reaching application to many areas of life.

Although many submissions to *The Voice's* "Dear Barb" column relate to AU's student population, *Dear Barb* the book appeals to a broader readership. AU students looking for student-specific advice aren't out of luck though: it does pop up within other topics, and they can also scan through the hundreds of "Dear Barb" columns on *The Voice's* website. Or they can email Dear Barb herself and possibly appear in a future column.

Dear Barb, the book, is available in paperback and ebook formats, though Amazon and Kobo. More information on Barbara Godin and her new book is available on Godin's website at www.barbgodin.com.

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

Fly on the Wall Rewilding the Garden of Our Summer Soul

Jason Sullivan



With help from Hesiod of Ancient Greece!

Beard era circa 2020 implies new formulations of the phrase: does the carpet match the drapes? Prescient though this giggled query may be, it connotes timeless equivocations whereby what's outside (or above) is taken to signify what's inside (or below). Sure, we mouth slogans that it's what's inside that counts, but superficial aesthetic judgments are only ever an intuitive claim away.

Study desks can look dishevelled and we can adopt an Einstein-esque countenance, complete with ruffled hair and lazybones gaze. These appearances may diminish us in the eyes of others, or they may portray a perfect portrait of academic excellence. It's all relative and, really, whose to say what needs to be tended in a given place or way? What matters most is our concrete accomplishments in terms of assignments written and readings absorbed. When things get rough and our outer realm starts to overwhelm our inner sanctity it helps to put things in perspective. There is so much that does *not* need to be done. As the great sage Lao Tzu once wrote, "One does things so that one needs to do nothing. One takes actions so that one needs no action."

Less is more, and naturally so, when we achieve a stable peace with our priorities including the appearance of ourselves and our surroundings.

And Now a Humbling Word From Hesiod

The great poet Hesiod, whose earthy aphoristic poems followed the heroic epoch of Homer, discussed the practical psychological exigencies of productive farming and productively inhabiting the field of life. Hesiod noted that a certain trick of fate or sleight of hand underlay

the human predicament whereby calamities appear and overwhelm our well-planned defences. At AU, remember, being our own study boss is a humongous responsibility that can overburden even our most Atlasian shoulders. Hesiod wrote: “For the gods keep hidden from men the means of life. Else you would easily do work enough in a day to supply you for a full year even without working; soon would you put away your rudder over the smoke, and the fields worked by ox and sturdy mule would run to waste.” Less is more, if the more can come from less labour.

As with Lao Tzu, Hesiod suggested that the big lie of productivity is that much could be done with less if only we understood how to maximize our time and space and allow things to just flow. Heartfelt words can express in a moment what a lifetime of feelings failed to address; likewise, twenty minutes of active brain effluvia can lava over a whole weekend of procrastination. Sometimes. And when we choose to actively forget the priorities of other people (or other versions of ourselves!) that is when we set ourselves loose and unleash our creative ambitions. Being in an AU classroom of one means that we must keep our singular scholarly selves focused against the external and coercive expectations that lord over the reality of our efforts. Rome nor Athens were built in a day and sometimes to let things be is the best way forward as we zoom in on what’s important.

Case Study, Yard Labour: Weeds and Long Grass can be Dreams Realized

Here in deep summer the outside beckons for fun but also for work, work, work! If you’re like millions of Canadians you have some sort of yard work dragging your spirit into the gutter like a convict trudging back to the prison yard. A wise local pastor and noted horticulturalist once addressed a gardening assembly at my local community college; he began his talk by suggesting that we leave the term ‘yard’ to the prison guards and instead substitute the more verdant and prosaic word ‘garden’. Instead of mowing the annoying yard we can see that we’re lovingly tending our garden.

So what does the garden of our study soul require? Space, time, epiphany, patience—the same traits that allow for success in any discipline of life. Like a good gardener, we have to be able to lie back and enjoy our creation. Look how far you’ve come; if you’re reading this you’ve probably already achieved some wins at distance education so remember to rest on your laurels on a sunny summer afternoon!

Outer or Inner? Both. Winner Winner, Chicken Dinner!

Gardens are more than a metaphor for labours of love; they too match the ideological claim that what’s outside expresses what’s within. Historically the middle class lawn- scape was ground zero for the procreation of petty expressions of superiority and belonging. “Jeff VanderMeer feels that ‘benign neglect’ is superior to traditional lawn care. ‘Not spending any money at all on fertilizers, or raking leaves,’ he says, ‘is preferable, and doable on any budget.’” We’re held back

AU-thentic Events Upcoming AU Related Events

AUSU Council Meeting

Wed, Aug 19, 6:30 to 8:00 pm MDT
Teleconference
Hosted by AUSU
www.ausu.org/event/august-2020-council-meeting/
No pre-registration required; e-mail governance@ausu.org for meeting package

Talk to a Librarian Drop-in Session

Thurs, Aug 20, 3:00 to 3:30 pm MDT
Online via Microsoft Teams
Hosted by AU Library
www.facebook.com/events/516644615729369
No pre-registration necessary; access through above link

The Grad Lounge

Fri, Aug 21, 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-aug-21
No pre-registration necessary; access through above link

All events are free unless otherwise noted.

by mere convention; “meadows are a culturally important form, but people worry they look unkempt.”

There’s a history to this association of the external realm or nature with either an inner indolence or an inborn productivity. “Americans were lured by an age-old marketing approach, one utilized by razor and makeup entrepreneurs: convince consumers your products will transform their lives, and elevate an unkempt and slovenly appearance to a prosperous one. Lawn maintenance—once accomplished by slave labor for elites attempting to mimic the landscapes of European estates—is a hallmark of wealth, the opposite of swept-dirt lawns dotted with grazing livestock.” Clearly there’s a sociological case to be made to let the ol-back forty idle verdant into an edenic bliss for awhile; we can even say we’ve learned in university this practical skill of letting things flourish as they are!

And anyway, if we feel even a shade of slavery in our academic and domestic toils we’re on the road to ruin. Who wants to recreate abhorrent cultural norms of yore, especially if slaves were involved? Consider the facts of the matter; monoculture lawns demanding constant mowing are the whiny whelp of environmental desiccation. Plus, they (like our time wasted on apps and games when we could be studying with haste and wit and then on to funner climes) are expensive: “Americans spend an estimated \$36 billion on lawn care annually, and the amount of lawns we maintain could roughly cover the state of Florida.” So as Lao Tzu suggests, and as Hesiod mourns its loss, less is more when it comes to gardening our outdoor spaces.

Like burning out on an excess of studying, with its diminished returns in memory recall and academic inspiration, the worst thing we can do is force ourselves to perpetually push our limits of productivity. “Social scientists have traced our affection for lawns to “savannah syndrome” an affinity for the short-grasses of east Africa where humans evolved”; recent studies reveal that insect numbers are remarkably low – monarch and rusty-patched bumblebee populations are both down nearly 90% in the last 20 years. Scientists estimate the arthropod population on Earth is down 45% from pre-industrial numbers” All this calamity for a superficial outcome seems pretty asinine; anyway, don’t superficial people yield superficial results?

Summer Joys and the Time to Enjoy them

Summer can carry us many places, to shady joys and happy embraces, but if we’re getting carried away from responsibilities let’s not make mincemeat out of our self esteem by devaluing the very spontaneity that allows for the best of us to be revealed.

What’s deep within ourselves is like a tiny bird asking the delightful Sisyphean question: how can I enjoy the toil that is inevitable while still embodying the best of myself? Hesiod concludes our inquiry into the nature of inertia in life and its corollary praxis in vacant cultural expressions: “said the hawk to the nightingale with speckled neck, while he carried her high up among the

Bannock and a Movie August Edition - First Nation Stories

Aug 1 to Aug 31, Online

Hosted by AU Nukskahtowin

news.athabascau.ca/events/bannock-and-a-movie-first-nation-stories

Access through above link

2020 AUSU By-election Campaign Period

Aug 12 to 31

www.ausu.org/governance/elections/

Visit above link for more information

The 5th IEEE Cyber Science and Technology Congress

Aug 17 to Aug 24, Online

Hosted by AU

news.athabascau.ca/events/the-5th-ieee-cyber-science-and-technology-congress-2

Register through above link

Talk to a Librarian Drop-in Session

Tues, Aug 18, 9:00 to 9:30 am MDT

Online via Microsoft Teams

Hosted by AU Library

www.facebook.com/events/516644632396034

No pre-registration necessary; access through above link

All events are free unless otherwise noted.

clouds, gripped fast in his talons, and she, pierced by his crooked talons, cried pitifully. To her he spoke disdainfully: 'Miserable thing, why do you cry out? One far stronger than you now holds you fast, and you must go wherever I take you, songstress as you are. And if I please I will make my meal of you, or let you go. He is a fool who tries to withstand the stronger, for he does not get the mastery and suffers pain besides his shame.' So said the swiftly flying hawk, the long-winged bird" (<https://www.theoi.com/Text/HesiodWorksDays.html>)

How we feel trumps how we appear in the eyes of others; in the silent depths of our study minds it really is what's inside that counts. The way out of feeling overwhelmed by coursework, and perhaps yard work and other summer dalliances, is surely to accept the things we cannot change while gathering up the wisdom to change those things that we can. Wildness of spirit, our birthright as dynamic learning minds, shall bear us forth into meadows of tranquil success if only we can see the beauty that we ourselves embody.

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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.

Scholarship of the Week

Digging up scholarship treasure for AU students.

Scholarship name: Ken and Janny Hutchinson Scholarship in Architecture

Sponsored by: AU, along with donors Daytona Homes and Ralph Hutchinson

Deadline: September 1, 2020

Potential payout: \$1500

Eligibility restriction: Applicants must be current RAIC Syllabus students or current AU students in either the Post-Baccalaureate Diploma in Architecture or the B.Sc. in Architecture and have a demonstrated academic record of student success.

What's required: A completed application form including personal and academic information, along with a description of major architectural projects you have led or managed, a description of your leadership roles in the community or in your profession, a maximum 500-word essay on how this scholarship will impact your education, and two written reference letters.

Tips: Read the Letter of Recommendation section carefully for precise information on the reference letter process.

Where to get info: registrar.athabascau.ca/studentawards/undergraduate.php#151



The Creative Spark

Five Tips for Musical Writing

Marie Well



You don't have to be Beyoncé to sound musical. Stephen King sounds musical, and I'd guess he doesn't sing. You just need a smoking hot pen. And a few literary tools. Fortunately, Rayne Hall has just the toolbox you might be looking for.

Tip #1: Too much alliteration sounds like alligators: shocking.

According to author Rayne Hall (2015), “When a sound is repeated at the beginning of two or more words close together, this is called 'alliteration'. It's the most effective way to place your sound, but if overdone it can sound silly, so use this technique with thought” (45%).

Argh! I used to overdo alliteration. Too many of my words started with the same sound. And I'd read every sentence out loud, lapping up every bit of alliteration. The alliteration sounded poetic, but poetry was not the

purpose. Instead, beauty and clarity should be the aims. (But do read your writing out loud any chance. Finding flow will make you a better writer.)

Here's when to use alliteration wisely: “If you want to emphasize a sentence, perhaps for an emotional revelation or a shocking twist, or make the reader remember a certain phrase, try alliteration to make the section poignant and punchy” (Hall, Rayne, 45%).

Also, use alliteration for audio: “Alliteration is highly effective for audiobooks, performances and reading aloud. It also works superbly in humor, in poetry, for public speeches, for slogans, headlines and titles” (Hall, 2015, 46%). Also, alliteration adds flavor to podcasts and YouTube videos.

A great way to make your writing sound musical is to put it to actual music. Tweak your writing so the words fit perfectly in each beat, the sentences in each line, and the paragraphs in each stanza. But don't discard the music. Oh, keep it for a splash. Just make sure it's copyright free.

Alliteration can make you musical, but other catchy tactics make you just as irresistible: assonance and consonance.

Tip #2: Assonance and consonance: winner word dinners for hungry writers.

Rayne Hall (2015) says, “Consonance: a consonant sound (such as 'S', 'P', 'B', 'SL') is repeated in the middle of several words close together. Examples: a ghostly presence, plucky attacker, jolly pleasures, washed by waves, apprehend the impostor” (47%).

Rayne continues (2015), “Assonance: a vowel sound (such as 'OO', 'OH', 'EE') is repeated in the middle of several words close together. Examples: nitty-gritty, as soon as she put on her boots, now the dog howled, fear squeezed her chest.”

But Rayne turns these literary tricks into a writer's playground: "To get a strong effect, you can combine assonance or consonance with alliterations of the same sound. Example using 'S': the housekeeper insisted it was a silly rumor, but I had heard the servants whisper about the secret of the ghostly presence" (47%).

Here, Rayne Hall (2015) uses the sound "s" to scare you. She also uses the sound "ee," as in words like "secret" or "wheezed," to invoke fear. Repeat those sounds in a single sentence to give a creepy feel. That's assonance and consonance in action. That's also something called "euphonics."

Euphonics list the emotions behind different sounds (Hall, 2015). The more you can master the sound of your writing, the greater your writing style.

Again, use assonance and consonance for media that uses audio. And learn euphonics from Rayne Hall's book *Euphonics for Writers*. Euphonics will give you an edge in radio. And, why not, while you're at it, learn the radio voice?

Tip #3: Backloading: You'll end with a splash.

Rayne Hall (2015) teaches how to backload: "structure paragraphs so the most powerful word comes at the end. A paragraph break is a pause—and the last word before that pause lingers in the reader's mind. Make it count. Often, restructuring the sentence is all it takes, or perhaps adding, deleting, or replacing one word. Here are some examples:

Before: She knew she had to kill it.

After: She knew she had to kill" (51%).

I first learned of back loading from Joshua Schimel's book *Writing Science*. Backloading adds a punch. Can you feel the energy from ending a sentence with a snap?

Still not convinced? I've learned that every article I write needs to end with zest. I could write a fabulous article, but if the last sentence was dull, the reader leaves disappointed. Same thing with sentences. Just save your punchiest word for last. A simple restructuring will make it sizzle.

Tip #4: Frontloading: Splash it up at the start.

Rayne Hall (2015) described frontloading: "The principle is the same [as backloading]—put the most evocative word at the beginning of the paragraph—but it doesn't need to be the very first word, just one of the first. The number of syllables doesn't matter either" (51%).

Frontloading first came to my attention with Rayne. Oh, I wish I had known sooner. I would've front loaded and back loaded as many sentences as God-given. You might want to try this trick, too.

But "even if you don't want to use this technique for every paragraph, try frontloading and backloading every scene's first and last sentence" (Hall, 2015, 52%).

Wisely, I tried frontloading and backloading an entire article. But the magic was still amiss. What mistake did I make? I shoved in long sentence after long sentence. Monotonous, yes.

Tip #5: Mix long with short to sound super.

Rayne Hall (2015) advises, "it's best not to use more than two long sentences in a row, or your writing may feel tedious to the reader. Insert a shorter sentence here and there" (52%)

Mix up long sentences with short ones. Even one-word exclamations add spice, see? It's easier than you might've imagined. Try it, and I bet your writing grows livelier.

Rayne (2015) adds, “You can play with word length in the same way. Mix long, medium and short words to create a varied rhythm. In fast-paced action scenes, use a lot of short words (preferably with just one syllable) and in leisurely contemplative moments, apply many medium and some long words” (54%).

Compare short and long words and sentences: *Run, Jack, fast!* versus *Enjoy a leisurely stroll in the balmy weather, Mr. Jakes*. The two sentences have two different energies. Short words and short sentences are for high speed action—or kid's books—says Rayne Hall (2015). Long sentences are for leisure (Hall, 2015).

Well, I hope your pen is on fire, and you're raring to up your writing skill several notches. But mostly I hope the words peel from your page and turn into musical notes for your readers' adoring ears.

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Homemade is Better Knife Knowledge

Chef Corey



This past week my family and I camped in Dinosaur Provincial Park in southern Alberta. It was a great trip and was capped off by a two-night stay in Airdrie (a small city just north of Calgary) where my friend Chris, who I've known for almost 30 years, lives with his family. While visiting their house, his partner's daughter mentioned that she had been selling knives through one of those multi-level marketing companies, and she gave us a quick demonstration. When I looked at the chef's knife they own, I could feel a burr on one side. As someone very particular about honing and sharpening my knives, this made me curious about how many people know how to do either AND what knives you should own.

Many a celebrity chef might tell you that you should have a plethora of knives, each of which is a master at a particular task! But the truth is, you can do everything you need with four knives, three if you want to be more thrifty. Those knives are a Chef's knife of at least 8 – 10 inches, a serrated bread knife, a boning knife, and a paring knife. You should also have a steel honing rod.

So why those knives? Why not a butcher's knife, a scimitar (aka a breaking knife), a santoku, or a slicer? The truth is those knives are useful, and you would use them if you knew the reason you have them, but they aren't necessary. A good quality chef's knife can do 90% of the cutting, slicing, chopping, and dicing you need. A serrated bread knife is to slice bread, meat, pastries, and more delicate foods. A boning knife is for removing the bones from meat like chicken, fish, beef, or pork. And a paring knife is for those smaller items that you need, plus it can peel, core, and dice. I mentioned earlier that if you were thrifty, you could use three, and the one knife you could get away without is the boning knife because the chef's knife can do the work. It's a little more

awkward that way, but it works. I also mentioned a honing steel; notice I didn't say sharpening steel because the steel rod is not for sharpening it is for straightening the edge of your knife blade.

When knives come from the factory, they are all razor-sharp, and the edge should be absolutely straight. After use, the edge starts to curve slightly, either to the left or to the right. You can feel it if you run your thumbnail from the spine (or the back) of the knife to the tip. You will feel your nail grab a little, that's a burr. Once a burr starts, it needs to be removed, which is the job of the honing steel. Stand your steel straight up on a cutting board. The handle will have a funny shaped end to it; mine has three sides. That end is set so that your blade will follow the correct angle to hone your edge. If you have a specialty knife, make sure you get that manufacturer's honing steel, because they might have a different angle that the blade should be honed to. Shun knives, for example, require a tighter angle, whereas Victorinox or Henckels are a standard 20°. The best way to do this is to run the blade from the end of the knife to the point (the tip) in a downward motion. I usually do six times on each side in an alternating pattern or 3, 2, 1. This motion works well with all straight-edge knives, but how does one sharpen your serrated knife. The serrations need you to work one groove at a time. So start on the cutting board at the 20-degree angle, and slide down, then slide up but keep your angle consistent.



So, I've described how to hone your knife, but what about sharpening your knives. I recommend you take your blades to a professional for sharpening, but if you're interested in doing this yourself, you'll want to buy a whetstone. They come in various grits—the higher the number, the finer the grit—like sandpaper. To get a razor-sharp edge, you'll want to find the finest grit you can, and many knife sharpening kits on Amazon come with at least three stones. Look for quality stones and do your research before buying them. Having said that, I've worked in a couple of restaurants, and they all had a guy they would call every few months to sharpen their restaurant knives. Those of us who used our knives would learn how to sharpen them ourselves, or we took to a place to get them sharpened. I like to sharpen my knives, and I have a dry stone that I use. However, I have, as of late, been thinking of getting a good quality whetstone for sharpening my knives as my older kids now have pocket knives for Scouting, and I'd like to teach them the right way to sharpen their knives.



I have been sharpening my knives for years because I enjoy it. However, paying the good money to someone to make sure you have razor-sharp blades is worth it: dull knives cause many knife injuries. A dull knife forces you to work harder, so you are more likely to injure yourself, whereas a sharp knife requires less effort to cut through food.

Now let's talk cutting boards. There are suitable surfaces to cut on and bad surfaces. If you use a terrible surface, stop! The suitable surfaces are hardwood, bamboo composite or plastic cutting boards. You can get them at kitchen supply stores, Amazon, Wholesale clubs, or your local grocery store. It would be best if you got a cutting board that is longer than your longest knife blade. If you have a 10-inch chef's knife, then your cutting board should be 12 inches from corner to corner. If your cutting board is not any of the above mentioned, please stop cutting on it. I'm sure it's super pretty, and I'll bet your friends think so too. So turn it into a great cheese platter, or use it for charcuterie, but a cutting board it should not be.

How much should you spend on a quality knife? That answer depends on how much money you have. A good quality knife could be over \$100, most of my knives were. But you get what you pay for; buying a cheap knife means the blade might not hold a sharp edge as long, but a quality knife (notice I didn't say expensive) means your knife will stay sharper longer. Invest in a good set of knives, but do some research. There are marketing companies out there that will sell you quality knives, but you can also go to a kitchen supply store or knife store and buy some. But don't feel you have to be in a hurry to buy them. It's ok to build up your set as you can afford to. The number one knife you should buy first is a chef's knife, because that will do 90% of the work for you, and you can substitute it for the other knives as you need to.

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

Stephanie asks for suggestions of places offering student discounts; a flood of responses with great discount tips! Sumaiyyah has questions about the funding process; other funded students help out with advice. Kimberly is curious how AU determines which province a student is resident in, when they are temporarily living in another province.

Other posts include tuition increases, Faculty of Biz program change, course refunds, podcasts, and working full time while doing a degree.

reddit

A flurry of questions covering contract end dates, verification of enrolment, letters of permission, and courses BIOL 310, MATH 215, and MATH 265.

Twitter

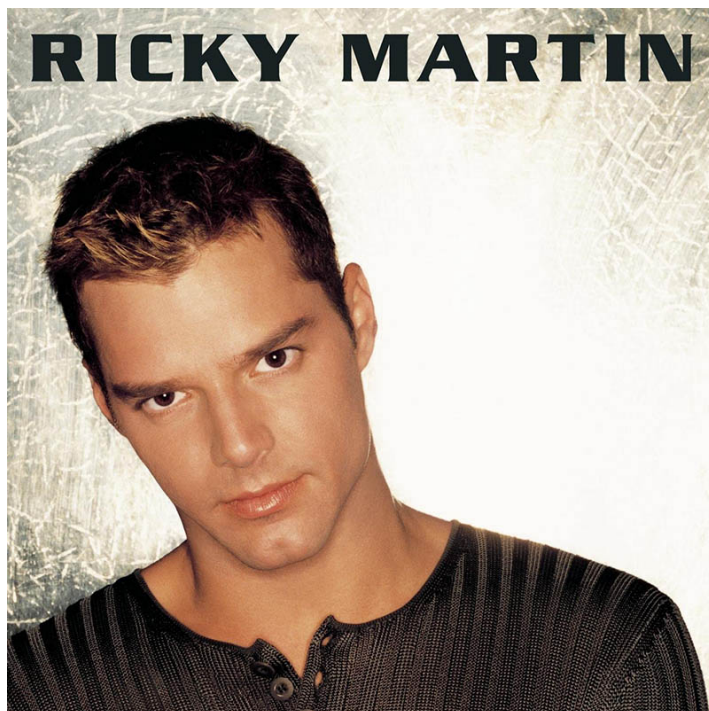
@AthabascaU tweets: "Let's spread some love for the #AthaU20 grads! We're working on a little video project and need YOUR help! <https://bit.ly/3a7jT1C> cc: @austudentsunion @AUGSA."

@austudentsunion tweets: "Want a chance to get involved with your Students' Union from home? AUSU is now recruiting #AthabascaU students for our Student Advisory Committee, which helps provide AUSU with feedback on various student topics. Apply now! <https://bit.ly/2PJsoGM>."

Beats from the Basement

Ricky Martin

Milica Markovic



Album: *Ricky Martin* (1999)

Artist: Ricky Martin

How can I talk about Spanish-language music without mentioning the King of Latin Pop himself? Enrique Martín Morales (also known as “Ricky Martin”) is one of the artists who introduced me to this festive genre through various party mixes from the late 90s, and the fun hasn’t stopped since then.

Like several of his contemporaries, including Shakira and Enrique Iglesias, Martin successfully crossed over to the English-speaking market with his second self-titled album in 1999. It contains a reasonable blend of dance songs and ballads, most performed in English.

Latin music, I can admit, can sound fairly repetitive; luckily, that isn’t the case with this album as there are enough interesting sounds for the average listener to enjoy. Gospel, disco, freestyle, and instruments such as the sitar and tabla help these songs feel somewhat less contrived.

I say somewhat, because the album isn’t without a few setbacks. The production isn’t the cleanest, only one song deals with a theme other than romance, the inappropriate puns in places are obnoxious, and—dare I argue—Martin performs tracks that don’t always suit his vocals. The raw emotion in his voice lends itself well to sentimental pieces as opposed to some of the loud and even exaggerated numbers.

Ironically, the latter is dull at times. As popular as “Livin’ La Vida Loca” is, for example, I think Martin has recorded better hits. It lacks the energy and direction of his other party tunes, despite him clearly trying hard to breathe life into it.

Meanwhile, “The Cup of Life” is everything I want from the genre as a whole. I can’t decide which is better between this and Queen’s “We Are the Champions,” two very different themes for the FIFA World Cup. Compared to the dramatic and reflective nature of “Champions,” Martin’s take is adrenaline-inducing and intense, preparing you for the greatest sporting event you’ve ever witnessed.

Another favourite of mine is “María,” which somehow manages to be both energetic and relaxing. I wouldn’t be surprised if the song was intended to be used in beginner’s Latin dance classes because of how easy it is to follow.

It’s a shame Martin isn’t known for his slow songs though, because they are mesmerizing and surprisingly authentic. I would even recommend skipping all the other ones on the album to fully immerse yourselves in their beauty.

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



Scholars, Start Your Business How to Love Your Customers and Employees

Marie Well



Ah, love! Love feels best given, not received. But when you love your customers and employees, it feels awesome for all—and makes you wealthy.

You know the revised golden rule, don't you? Treat others not as you want to be treated, but as *they* want to be treated. Do so to grow wealthy—not just with dollars but with spirit.

But how do we do that?

Customers want you to be your ethical best.

Author Mariotti (2019) says, “Customers are more confident buying goods and services from an ethical company. People don’t trust a company to offer high-quality goods and services if it has a reputation for cheating its employees or lying to customers” (26%).

Ethics matter. I shopped at an unethical grocery store. None of the items were priced, and when you

approached the till, the clerk would call out an astronomical price. If you balked, the clerk would sometimes halve the price, still making a profit. Robbery!

Worse, the expiry date on items was sometimes five years ago. Protein shakes I bought had long expired. Fruits and veggies were beaten up at premium price.

So, what did I do? I stopped shopping at that haunt. Without love for your customers, your company might as well show your customers the door. So these five traits will show your customers you're love-struck:

“1. Honesty: Be honest and transparent in all areas. Inform customers about both the advantages and drawbacks of your product. If you offer a service, describe your qualifications and abilities accurately” (Mariotti, 2019, 27%).

“2. Respect: Take customer complaints seriously. These are opportunities to improve your business. Research shows that only one of every fifty unsatisfied customers complains to the merchant. When you fix a situation that made one customer unhappy, you may be saving forty-nine other customers from the same frustration—and retaining them as customers” (Mariotti, 2019, 27%).

Customer service matters. Recently, I phoned my bank to see if I could get a fabulous feature. On the same day, two customer service reps called me back. One said, “I can't do it, but, sigh, I can check.” The other said, “Let's see what we can do.” Neither got me what I requested, but my perception of them was worlds apart. And, as a bonus, the upbeat lady referred me to another rep. And, in the end, that rep granted me the fabulous feature.

I bet you've got a customer service star within you. You hold the key to happiness. It's the key to your office door.

“3. Accessibility: Keep to the business hours you advertise. Be available when you promise to be” (Mariotti, 2019, 27%).

At a sandwich shop, I asked the owner what time the following day he'd be closing. He said, “We will stay open until 4:30 for you. Don't worry.” The next day I arrived at 3:00, and he had already

closed. Nice guy, but he'd be nicer if he closed at the posted time. If you put up a sign, your destined to commit.

"4. Attention: Focus your attention on the customer with whom you are working at the moment. Be present for that customer whether the sale is big or small. Don't be distracted by your cell phone!" (Mariotti, 2019, 27%).

Employees need love and treats—and ethical owners.

Author Mariotti says, "Employees feel discouraged and frustrated when their workplace is not ethical. They are more likely to steal from the company, lie, and cheat" (26%).

One college I worked for was toxic. An employee would walk by me and shout, "Run for the hills. Leave this hellhole!" Other employees, in front of the students, would shout. The turnover of employees was outrageous. Three of us marketers, within three months, disappeared. Three front desk receptionists, every year, would quit or be canned.

You need to discover ways to bask your employees in love. By showing them love, you'll have a more loyal, hardworking, ethical staff. Mariotti (2019) says, "Treat your employees like family" (28%). Here's how:

"1. Treat them fairly and considerately. (Mariotti, 2019, 28%).

Lest we forget the golden rule—treat others as *they* like to be treated, not how *we* like to be treated.

2. "Support lifelong learning" (Mariotti, 2019, 28%).

My boss dangled a carrot at my nose. He tucked into the budget a sizable fund for me to get training. And I could choose the courses of my dreams. I felt a rush of, not just loyalty, but motivation. That rush in your employees is worth gold. That gold reflects beautifully on your company culture.

3. "Create an environment that makes your employees want to stay" (Mariotti, 2019, 28%).

Some companies just sound awesome: paid time off, benefits, healthy lunches, foosball tables, gift certificates to bicycle shops. Who wouldn't want to work at those playgrounds? Oops, I mean offices.

One business owner I know gives Christmas bonuses and regular restaurant dining. Any perk you give an employee draws out greater loyalty. And you deserve a loyal staff.

4. "Encourage your employees to strike a healthy balance between their jobs and their personal lives. Always remember that your employees have personal lives and responsibilities" (Mariotti, 2019, 28%).

A loved one would tell his staff, "At 5 pm sharp, every day, I want you all packing up. It's time to go home." His motto was work-life balance matters. And he gained an efficient staff due to his leadership.

And a company I worked for let us start and end work whenever we wanted, as long as we put in an 8-hour shift. And no-one was expected to work late. One staff would show up at 11 am and leave a tad early, with no-one the wiser. But his work shone. Work life balance would make all your staff shine.

Yes, love your customers and employees. By doing so, you'll grow rich—not just financially, but spiritually. Ah, love. It's your new bottom line.

References

Mariotti, Steve. (2019). *The Young Entrepreneur's Guide to Starting and Running a Business: Turn Your Ideas into Money*. New York, NY: Currency Books. [Kindle Unlimited]. Retrieved from amazon.ca.





Dear
Barb

Barbara Godin

Distance Not Easy

Dear Barb:

My parents divorced when I was 10 years old. My dad moved away with this new girlfriend and seemed to just forget about us. I loved my dad and really missed him at the time, but eventually I got angry and wondered why he never came back to see me or my brother.

I am in my thirties now and still have no contact with my dad. He reached out a few years back, but I was so filled with anger that I didn't want to see him. My brother never talks about him, either. I have tried to talk to my brother about it, but he refuses to; he says dad is dead to him.

To be honest, he doesn't seem to be affected by the estrangement from our dad. I wish I could be like that, but I get angry when I remember watching mom struggle while being a single parent. It was hard for her, both financially and emotionally. But she is doing much better now and has even remarried. It is so nice to see her happy.

My dilemma is whether it would be beneficial for me to reach out to my dad and try to establish some type of relationship with him. I have heard that he and his new wife have another child, so I do have a much younger sibling that I would like to meet. When I mentioned how I felt to my brother he said he is not interested and doesn't want to hear about our dad or his child. I don't want to cause problems with my brother or my mom.

Although my mom said it's totally up to me and that I have to do what feels right to me. I don't want to make the situation worse; I am actually looking for some peace for our family. Looking forward to your point of view. Thanks, Lori.

Hi Lori:

Thanks for your letter. I believe many adults of divorce have felt similar feelings. I agree with your mom, you need to do what feels right for you. You obviously have a desire to reconnect with your dad and for that reason it is important that you make some attempt to reconcile with him. On the other hand your brother does not feel the same, therefore you have to be careful not to push him, or make him feel bad about his decision. Who knows what the future may bring. If things work out with you and your dad, he may be willing to give it a try.

Best of luck Lori.

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.



Chazz Bravado**A Word to the Wise Male Feminist**

So I go to
the beach to
try and hook
up with
some
chicky-
poos...



...and I end up
tripping over a
lovely pair of
gams.



So I fall over
onto some big
guy's patookus,
and he ups and
clocks me so
hard...



...my Ray-
Bans fly
away and
bounce off
an old lady's
nose.



Naturally the
Chazz Man had
to whip off a
witty remark
about the size
of her schnozz.



So today's
lesson,
kiddies, is
always
remember
to social
distance.

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IMPORTANT DATES

- **Aug 12-31:** [AUSU By-election Campaign Period](#)
- **Aug 15:** [Sept degree requirements deadline](#)
- **Aug 19:** [AUSU Public Council Meeting](#)
- **Aug 25:** [AUSU By-election](#)
- **Aug 31:** [Deadline to apply for course extension for Sep](#)
- **Sep 10:** [Deadline to register in a course starting Oct 1](#)

By-Election Candidates Announced!

AUSU currently has 4 vacant seats on council, so we will be holding a by-election on August 25, 2020! We have 8 candidates running for student council in our by-election!

Name	Location
Jennifer Bouley	Etobicoke, ON
Almigdad Eldoma	Edmonton, AB
Karen Fletcher	Kanata, ON
Natalia Iwanek	Mississauga, ON
Amber McDuffe	Edmonton, AB
Hannah Olsen	Edmonton, AB
Chris Sloboda	Edmonton, AB
Mark Teeninga	Stoney Creek, ON

AUSU has an impact on your experience as a distance education student at AU, no matter where live. The students you elect to council will guide and direct your Students' Union in its mandate to provide services, support, and advocacy for AU students.

Ballots will be emailed to all AUSU members on August 25, 2020. Make sure to VOTE!

Find out more about the candidates:

- Check out candidate biographies [HERE](#).
- Ask the candidates questions in the [FORUMS](#).

VOTE on AUG 25



AUSU Open Mic – New Episode!

Happy 50th birthday Athabasca University! In our [latest podcast episode](#), AUSU sits down with Carole Stevenson-Roy, Athabasca University's Associate VP of Marketing and Communications, and Leslie Bergin, Athabasca University's Director of Development and Alumni Engagement to chat about the exciting plans and student events Athabasca University will be hosting while celebrating the institution's 50th anniversary and the 2020 student convocation in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic.

[Click to Listen to this Episode](#)

Check out all AUSU Open Mic episodes online [here](#).



Win \$100 for Filling out Review!

AUSU has launched new online [Peer Course Reviews](#) for Athabasca University undergraduate courses!

Fill out a review [HERE](#) by August 31 to enter to win a \$100 Amazon Gift card!



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THE VOICE

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