

# THE VOICE

Vol 29 Issue 23 2021-06-11

## Minds We Meet

Interviewing Students Like You

## Council Connection

May 21, 2021 Meeting

## Block Parent

Review of their newest *Sick Year, Bro!*



*Plus:*

*Dear Barb: The Green-Eyed Friend*  
*Course Exam: ASTR 310*  
*and much more!*

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# LETTERS TO THE EDITOR



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

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

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



## Editorial

### What's With the Names

Karl Low



Every day, *the Voice Magazine* uploads a select article to the website just to give you a sneak-peek of what's coming up in the magazine on Friday. If you're one of the people who take advantage of that sneak peek, you may have noticed something odd earlier in the week. Our site was listing me as the author of all pieces. It wasn't that the power had all gone to my head, but rather that our site, for some reason, was refusing to recognize anybody but myself as an article's author. Fortunately, we contacted Kobot.ca, the guys who built the new website you're now familiar with, and they managed to get in and fix it up just as the rest of the magazine was published on the website.

As for the PDF, that's going to be delayed a bit more today as I've been watching convocation happen in the background while working. Once again, I have to admit that I'm impressed by how AU has managed to create a convocation ceremony even at a distance that just works.

Of course, in a COVID-19 world, a physical gathering wasn't a realistic scenario, but AU has done a nifty thing by getting as many graduands as they could connect via live cameras, and while the deans and other notables from AU read out the names and the graduand's thanks to friends, family, and supporters (as they have at every Convocation, even before they were virtual) you could see several of them on screen, wearing their graduation caps. As their names were read, they'd switch the tassel of the cap from the right side to the left. It's a tradition that now, in a virtual setting, works excellently to bring the attention to the correct person, so that while the announcer reads, we can see the faces (and the smiles and sometimes tears) of the graduands as they officially graduate.

One of the memorable moments for me was seeing one gentleman multi-tasking, attending his graduation even while continuing his work as what appeared to be a Canada Post mail-carrier. It kind of brought home how just how unusual not just the ceremony is, but AU as a whole.

In the *Voice Magazine* this week, we're interviewing student Narmeen Nasir, who came initially from Pakistan to Yellowknife, now living in Fort MacMurray, new writer Kaisha Nasir managed to get in touch with her and interview her about her choice of AU, struggles at Tim Hortons and finding the kindness of strangers along her journey.

Also this week, Kent Provost brings us the Council Connection from the May 21, 2021 AUSU Council Meeting. If the name sounds familiar, it's because Kent was the honourable mention in the *Voice Magazine's* Fiction writing contest. He's got a solid report of the meeting so if you're curious as to what AUSU has been up to, you'll want to check that out.

We also have Jessica Young with a review of punk-pop band (leaning more toward the punk) Block Parent's new album, *Sick Year, Bro!*

Of course, we also have our selection of advice, news, events, scholarships, and other articles from students and graduates of AU, whether that's advice on developing relationships, yourself, or even on the choice of a grill now that we're hitting barbeque season. Enjoy the read!

A stylized, handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Karl". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long, sweeping tail on the letter 'l'.

# MINDS WE MEET



**Can you give us a little bit of background information about yourself? Who are you? Where do you live, where do you come from?**

"I am Narmeen Nasir. I came to Canada with my family from Pakistan, seven years ago, when I was 12 years old. We initially landed in Yellowknife and I started middle school there. In Pakistan I studied in a private London Board based school so I had no problem with speaking, writing or reading English as most my class fellows and teachers had assumed.

After three months, we went back to Pakistan. We landed in Calgary after a year in Pakistan and I completed middle school in Calgary. Finally, we moved to Fort McMurray where I graduated from High school and attended Keyano College for 2 semesters. Currently, I work in a bank as a CSR, have completed Mutual Funds certification and pursuing Bachelors in Business Management from AU.

**Since your childhood was spent in Pakistan, how was your reaction such a big life change?**

I had so many mixed feelings that its hard to really put it in words. Most people here think that Pakistan is like this poverty-stricken nation with slums, etc. Yes, there are areas like that but mostly in the rural areas. The cities are quite similar to the ones here in Canada. I lived in the Capital city of Islamabad and its very similar to Calgary here. Islamabad is surrounded by the Margalla Hills and is very peaceful. There is McDonalds, KFC, Burger King, Dunkin Doughnuts, and the Centaurus Mall (you can search the google images). My dad worked in British Petroleum as an petroleum technologist and we were quite well off. We lived in a huge mansion-like house with a nice backyard with swings and slide, we had housekeepers to do the chores and a personal driver as well. The housekeepers and driver lived in an annex 24/7.

Due to change of governments and national unrest, my parents decided to migrate to Canada. My father applied in the Federal Skills category and after 9 months we were packing up to travel to our new home. My dad took a short-term leave from work. The feeling was similar to first day of school. I was nervous and sad. The realization became more obvious when our dream house was put up for sale. I still remember that me and my two elder sisters wrote letters to that house and buried them in the backyard. We wrote farewell messages on our cupboards and I cried a lot. For the first time I saw my eldest sister break down as well. She was so emotionally strong. (I should note that this was an emotional subject for Narmeen, who teared up while speaking of this.)

Our departing flight from Pakistan was scheduled for 3am and I will never forget the moment we sat in my dad's friend's car to be taken to the airport. I felt like I was leaving a part of me there. After travelling for what seemed like ages, we arrived at the Toronto airport and it took

forever to get all the paper work sorted out. My mom's uncle who lived in Scar Bourgh came to pick us up since we had a 24 hr stay.

When we started to travel from Edmonton to Yellowknife in one of those small aircrafts, all we could see around 20 mins before landing was unpopulated snow-covered land. When the pilot announced that we were landing, we couldn't see any signs of an airport. Then in the middle of snow was an airstrip and we landed. I was shocked to see that the airport was just one room big with the conveyor belt in the middle with our luggage. One of my dad's friend came to receive us but he just walked all the way to the air strip! Apparently, that's normal there. We had already arranged for our accommodation in an apartment in Yellowknife and it was so tiny compared to the mansion we were used to living. On top of that, it was on the 15<sup>th</sup> floor! The view was stunning. We could see all the lakes and had the best display of Aurora Lights. We stayed there for 3 months and joined school in April. The school had a beautiful lake view and we went to several field trips. For the first time I learnt about Aboriginal culture and tradition there. Due to employment difficulties we had to return to Pakistan but it was not the same as before. We rented a small place in Islamabad and lived there until my eldest sister completed highschool and applied to universities in Canada. After she got accepted in multiple universities, my dad resigned from work and we left for Canada.

We landed in Calgary and this time it seemed more familiar since it resembled Islamabad. We rented a house and soon were able to purchase our own. Another thing I found strange in Canada was using the public transport to go to school. We were used to cars and drivers and here we were asking around for buses and transits.

Finally, as things were settling down, we moved to Fort McMurray where my sister and brother-in-law lived. My dad had better employment opportunities in Fort McMurray since his background was in oil and gas industry. My dad and brother-in-law purchased a nice big house and we've been living together ever since along with my niece and nephews.

So far, our little town has survived the Horse River Fire of 2016 and the flood in 2020.

Both events had occurred in months of April/May. Thankfully, we managed to escape ahead of time, unharmed and quite prepared.

**Since you went through quite a few major live events, what or who motivated you to keep going. Who did you look up to?**

My parents have always been and still are the mountains of strength in every way possible. They are my Everest of support. My parents have always put us before themselves. I don't remember ever seeing them stressed or sad or even angry in front of us. They did experience all those emotions and I got to know that quite recently, but in the past, they never let us be aware of any negative emotions or challenges they faced. They have taught us to be honest and truthful to an extent that I cheated once in a Math test in High school and right after I handed in the paper, I ran to the teacher's office and told her. I told her to give me a zero on that test but she just smiled and told me to join a mentoring club as a "punishment". I did volunteer at the boys and girls club as a mentor afterwards for a year.

I had decided to complete high school earlier and my parents supported that decision. I went and asked my counsellor who clearly told me it was not possible to complete more than 50 credits in a year. My parents helped me think and look outside the box. After researching and calculating I knew that anything was possible if you had the mind to do it. I started work at Tim Hortons, applied for volunteering, took several courses online through Distance Learning Alberta and merged Grade 11 and Grade 12 in one year.



My mother was very supportive. We had spent all our lives literally like royalty and Tim Hortons proved to be the very place that I seemed unfit for. Its so fast paced and everyone's like running around so in house training is not easy but everyone there was very helpful and friendly. After several spills, burns from hot coffee and wrong orders I just thought I couldn't do it. I went home that day and just cried. I was just so overwhelmed. But my mother applied there as well to uplift my spirit and to show me that if she could handle the stress so could I. I grabbed onto that thought and pushed myself to continue. We worked different shifts and for most of the year my life was just school, work, volunteering, and exams.

Through my parents' motivation, advice and support I was able to graduate High School at the age of 16 and only one person had done that before me 3 decades ago.

**When you worked in Tim Horton, was there an event or customer who left a good impression on you? The kind that you'd always remember?**

Yes, glad you asked that. The mention of Tim Hortons reminds me of that customer. It was the busiest time of the day when the customer came and asked me to make Cotton Candy Iced Capp. I had no idea what to do. My supervisors were extremely busy, and some were on break. I was just going around hopelessly looking for clues while the line up was increasing when the customer called me back to the counter. He just smiled and asked if I had just joined work and I told him yes. He just said don't worry, let me help you, just make a regular Iced Capp with raspberry shot. I felt such relief at that time. I will never forget his kindness and patience. We should all give new workers a chance to assimilate in the workplace instead of telling them off.

Kindness is the principle of Humanity and rudeness can destroy that principle.

**What's your program (if any) and what are your plans for this education once you finish? How does it fit in with where you want to go?**

I am in my second year of Bachelor of Business Management and I would like to grow my career in banking to move from customer service/retail to management and leadership position.

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

I like amateur writing, reading anything that catches my interest from sloppy love stories to Stephen King. I also enjoy fitness activities like jogging, roller skating, badminton. Work keeps me busy the rest of the time. I also like baking, but only after everyone's gone to sleep and I have

## **AU-thentic Events** **Upcoming AU Related Events**

### **Bannock and a Movie June Edition: Two Spirit Stories**

Jun 1 to Jun 30

Online

Hosted by AU Nukshahtowin

[www.athabascau.ca/indigenous/bannock-and-a-movie/index.html](http://www.athabascau.ca/indigenous/bannock-and-a-movie/index.html)

Access through above link

### **Radical Empathy: Finding a Path to Bridging Racial Divides**

Tues, Jun 15, beginning 10:00 am MDT

Online, On-demand

Hosted by AU

[news.athabascau.ca/events/radical-empathy-finding-a-path-to-bridging-racial-divides/](http://news.athabascau.ca/events/radical-empathy-finding-a-path-to-bridging-racial-divides/)

Register through above link

### **CIDER Session Series: Appreciative Inquiry based faculty development: A mixed methods case study**

Wed, Jun 16, 11:00 am to 12:00 pm MDT

Online

Hosted by AU's International Review of Research in Open and Distributed Learning (IRRODL)

[cider.athabascau.ca/](http://cider.athabascau.ca/)

No pre-registration required; access through above link

### **The Grad Lounge**

Fri, Jun 18, 5:00 to 6:00 pm MDT

Online via Microsoft Teams

Hosted by AU Faculty of Graduate Studies

[fgs.athabascau.ca/news/events/index.php](http://fgs.athabascau.ca/news/events/index.php)

No pre-registration necessary; access through above link

*All events are free unless otherwise noted.*

the kitchen all to myself. Baking helps me relax and calms my mind since it requires little thinking; I just have to follow a step-by-step procedure and the final product satisfies my sweet tooth. I play some music (no defined genre), prep the ingredients and I'm good to go.

**At what point did you waver the most about continuing your schooling? What caused it and what got you through it?**

When I started work, two years ago, I was attending classes in College but, at times I was called in for work during my days off. It became difficult to balance work and studies especially since I had to attend classes in a physical classroom. After a year of juggling, I decided to drop out of college but that also meant that I had to give up on my dream of graduating with a degree and climbing the career ladder. After reviewing the profiles of some of the managers and leaders within my organization, I became determined to continue my education. I researched for virtual learning and came across AU in the process. I was a bit skeptical at first because I had fast tracked high school and had to keep a few courses online so I aware of the problem of procrastination but I knew that I just had to push through to achieve my goals in life.

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

Online learning been a good experience for me since I can work without worrying about rushing to attend classes. The courses are flexible, and extensions are available. Study schedules are provided with each course so that I could track my progress. I dislike that there are no recorded lectures available. I know that the university has a class component as well, so it would be beneficial to record lectures or have some PowerPoint slides available for virtual students; not just "here's the ebook and guide, now good luck with learning"

**What (non-AU) book are you reading now?/What TV are you binging now?**

I am binging on Grey's Anatomy and the Marvel Series. My friends had recommended the Marvel Series several times but I thought the concept of super heroes with super human abilities were far from reality. But when I started watching, I just couldn't stop!

**Who's your favourite hero so far?**

That's a tough one. Captain America!



## Unearthing classic articles from previous issues of The Voice Magazine

AU's [2021 convocation](#) is online, for a second year in a row. To expand the virtual experience, we browsed through the archives for some glimpses of on-site convocation.

**Tents and harps and food, oh my!** Carla Benevides describes the feast for the eyes, ears, and taste buds that was Convocation 2004. *"This was not your normal run-of-the-mill graduation event, and to me it is reflective of how unique this university really is."* [Convocation 2004 – Photo Album](#) and [On The Scene Report – Convocation Extraordinaire, June 23, 2004](#).

**Photos tell a story.** Many AU students never have the opportunity to visit AU, or the town of Athabasca AB. Here are some photo montages from on-site AU convocations over the years: [Convocation 2008 Photo Album](#), [Photo Feature – The Road to Convocation](#) (2014), [At Convocation – A Photo Feature, Part II "Inside AU"](#) (2016), and [The Road at Convocation](#) (2018.)



## Music Review—Sick Year, Bro!

Jessica Young



**Artist:** Block Parent  
**Album:** *Sick Year, Bro!*

Canadian punk rock trio, Block Parent, has released their new album entitled *Sick Year, Bro!*—perfectly capturing their relentless energy and heartfelt comedy. Hailing proudly from small town Cambridge, Ontario, Block Parent is a three-piece unit focused on playing coming of age, self-deprecating punk rock. *Sick Year, Bro!* is a self-released album, featuring Jacob Verkerke on guitar, Jake Dodge on bass, and Zack Dodge on drums, with all three members providing vocals.

The band says, "Growing up is a painful and beautiful experience. It mutates and morphs ya into the chud loving critter you never thought you'd see reflecting back at ya in a pool of your own vomit. We hold onto the pains of nostalgia with our beer-soaked fists

while we anxiously hide our disdain and discomfort for a scary and confusing world—but we have each other. We'll grow old together and we'll absolutely get weirder. In the end, all we can do is embrace our flaws, accept our self-destruction, face our anxieties, and hold on to what we love—past, present, and future. Here's to you Cambridge, you beautiful and disgusting wretched hive of friendship and isolation. It's not much, but it's ours."

I have to say—I already love these guys. Having grown up in small-town Ontario myself, "a wretched hive of friendship and isolation" is a hilariously perfect description. After listening to the album, I can totally feel the small-town angst that creates Block Parent's classic punk sound.

*Sick Year, Bro!* has ten tracks: "Sight for Pink Eyes", "SUBPAR", "Helluva Bad Dip", "Comeuppance Go Downance", "Riopongu", "Landry's Video Kingdom", "Bill's Bargain Basement", "Quick Ask Zoe", "Take Part or Die", and "Stixville, Population 111,000 (originally by Deaf Children Playing)". If you're looking for something to relax to, this is not it. *Sick Year, Bro!* is aggressive, loud, old-school punk; a cross between older bands like The Descendants, Swinging Udders, or No FX, and new pop-punk like Living with Lions.

The last song on the album, "Stixville, Population 111,000", is absolutely my favourite—I love when a band includes a softer song on an otherwise intense album. "Stixville" is just a guitar and vocals, with more of a folk-punk meets gypsy-jazz vibe. The ultimate small-town anthem, the song captures intense longing for a change of scenery combined with the fear of the unknown: I wonder where I'll be in 10 years, hopefully not here". The disquieted lyrics are in stark, ironic contrast to the upbeat tonality. "Stixville" is catchy and super relatable, even for those who will never know the specific torture of the existential crisis caused by living in a small-town.

Check out Block Parent on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), and [Bandcamp](#). Stream *Sick Year, Bro!* anywhere you get your music.

*Jessica is completing her Bachelor of Human Resources and Labour Relations degree while pursuing her passion for writing and drinking coffee.*



## Homemade Is Better The Case for Grills

**Chef Corey**



Usually, I would be writing about a recipe or some history about why you do things a certain way in the kitchen. This week I thought I'd talk about grills. I recently bought a new grill, and it wasn't cheap. Still, after more than three years of research, tire kicking, contemplating, evaluating the level of quality in the different models and anecdotal experiences from friends and neighbours, I decided to go the mid-range in the more expensive grill lines.

I bought the Napoleon Prestige 500, which includes an infrared side burner and rotisserie with back burners. A few things I noticed about this grill when I was putting it together was the quality of the metal used. The grill grates are stainless steel and weigh a decent amount. They have some heft to them—which you

want. I also noticed that the tub was very heavy, with thick metal. The tub is all one piece; I didn't have to put the lid on separately, which I think is relatively standard. Each part of this grill was made with quality products and manufactured here in Canada.

Now, this article isn't to convince you to buy an expensive grill, nor is it an endorsement for my grill. Instead, I want to discuss what to look for in a quality grill and why the cheap grills have a time and a place. I will also dispense with some cleaning tips to ensure you get as many years out of the grill you buy or have already bought.

Previous to this grill, I bought a grocery store brand that was inexpensive. It was an ok grill for what I needed at the time, but I wasn't pleased with it. Money was tighter then, and the more expensive grill was out of reach for us. I bought the grill I thought would work for the time being. That grill lasted us ten years and would still keep going with some fixing up.

The parts I didn't like about it have more to do with the quality of materials used and the range of cooking space. The first third of the grill received no heat. The burners only heated 2/3 of the grill. It had drawers for holding all sorts of materials, which got wet if it rained and it wasn't covered, so you couldn't keep anything important in there. The grills themselves were cast iron, which is perfect, right? Well, it turns out cast iron is not my favourite material to grill on.

I love it in pans because it disperses the heat, but as a grill is terrible because it rusts easily. I had a light in the tub, but after a few cooks, the light was useless because the grease from the grill covered it. The rotisserie was pretty good, though. The motor had decent horsepower and was able to grill out a decent meal. However, to use it, I had to remove the grills because anything larger than a sausage rubbed against them. Now that I've given you a list of what I hated about my last grill let's look at some things you should look for when buying a grill and why those things will become important to consider.



## Construction

First, let's talk about the cooking surface. The most crucial detail about grill gates you want to consider is what material they are made from. Heavy-gauge stainless steel is my preference because it conducts heat efficiently in grills. That's why your oven racks are made from steel. Now, they will rust, but not the same way as cast iron. Cast iron needs to be cared for, babied, even coddled. You still need to clean it regularly, but then also keep it seasoned. If you can put in the time and energy to care for your cast iron, it will love you back.

But I prefer steel because it doesn't need the same kind of care. I can wash it, dry it, and leave it. I can scrape it clean and keep cooking, and any rust I might get on it will be only on the surface and can be cleaned off easily. Cast iron needs more care and more work unless you get enamelled. But, in my opinion, enamelled doesn't make sense. The coating is prone to chipping, leading to the grills rusting and being more brittle. I also have to add that this is my logic; you should always research what you want in a grill but consider these points.



The second aspect of buying a new grill you will want to look at is the quality of the tub materials. The significant difference between my old grill and my new grill is the thickness of the material used. My new grill is heavy and is a single-cast body, vs my old grill, which was welded and not very thick. The thickness of the metal matters because of thermodynamics. Who would have thought the law of thermodynamics would be relevant in your life. But thermodynamics are a vital definer of how the tub of a grill will hold in heat vs releasing it.

We want to trap as much heat inside the grill's body because the more heat we trap, the more consistent the cooking is. If a grill tub is poor at holding in the heat, it requires more energy to cook, which uses more fuel, which costs more money on your gas bill (for natural gas) or more propane fill-ups for propane grills.

Also, if your grill holds more energy, you can reduce the flame needed to cook the same cook—a fact I noticed immediately as I cook steak for the first time on the new grill. I almost overcooked them because there was WAY more heat kept in the body of the grill.

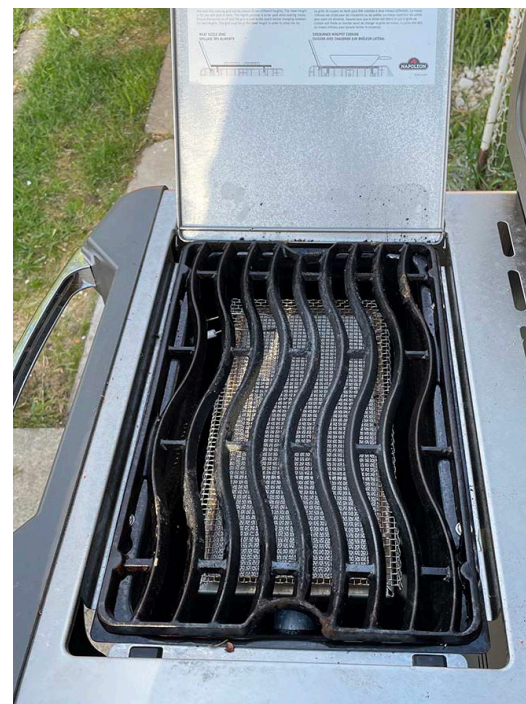
Third, consider the warranty and what it covers. If you buy a quality grill, the warranty will be more comprehensive and likely to cover more of the grill's parts. A quick comparison of a few



name-brand grills shows a warranty of at least ten years on most, if not all, parts, provided you follow the maintenance schedule that the manufacturer provides. I had my superstore branded grill for ten years, but it fell apart quicker because I didn't put in the work it needed and because it was made from cheap materials. My new grill has a lifetime warranty on many parts (lifetime of the grill, not your lifetime), but 15 years on other parts, so one could infer that lifetime, in this case, is at least 15 years with proper care and maintenance.

### Accessories

After these considerations, every grill will have accessories you can look at, such as rotisserie, lights, side burners; the list could go on. I'm sure if you paid enough, it would fetch you a beverage and open it for you too! These become nice to have, but I will say that I used my side burner on my last model quite a bit, and I also used my rotisserie a few times a year. It's very versatile because you can put beef, pork, chicken, or even make your own Donair meat. The point is, think about what you will use the accessories for and how often you will use them. A side burner can be handy, while a rotisserie might not be. A searing station is nice to have, but are you going to sear your steak before you cook it? I don't, but if I'm cooking a roast, I would.



### Maintenance

Once you've selected your grill, you will want to ensure you follow the manufacturer's guidelines on how to care for it. If you bought cast iron grates, clean them with soap and water before the first cook. Next, cover them in lard, coconut oil, or vegetable shortening and turn your grill to high. You will want to make sure you coat the entire grill grate in fat, then cook them to season them. After you've done this, you will need to re-season them at least once a week if you use your grill regularly or after the fifth cook otherwise.

If you have enamelled or stainless steel, you can skip this step, but you will want to ensure you leave your grill on for at least five minutes after you have used the grill. You want to turn the heat up to high and let the grill cook off any extra food leftover with a grill brush. I'm using a combination of a steel brush and a wooden one. The wooden one is good if because it can mould to the grooves or your grill.

If you do not use your grill more than five to six times a month, you should deep clean it in late September or mid-October. If you use it more frequently, then you should deep clean it every two months. To deep clean your grill, you will want to ensure your natural gas line is turned off, and you can disconnect it if you have a quick connection. For propane, remove your tank and unscrew the connection. Next, get yourself some rubber or nitrile gloves, baking soda, a bucket, a putty knife, a scrub brush, vinegar and water mixed 2:1 (water: vinegar) in a spray bottle, a shop vacuum, adjustable wrench, toothpicks or the burner tube cleaning materials your grill came with, and shop towels. You will also need a big plastic tub with soapy water to fit your grill grates.

- 1) Put on the gloves and eye protection if you have it and want it, then fill your cleaning tub with warm soapy water. Scrub your grills to get all the debris off, then dry them off and set them aside. Repeat this step with your diffuser plates (those are the angled metal that goes above your burner tubes). Set these aside to dry.



2) Unscrew or remove the clip for your burner tubes and inspect them. If they look like they are blocked, you can use a toothpick, or if your grill came with a wire brush and drill bit, you could use those to clean out the holes. Make sure the debris inside is removed as well.

3) Use the vacuum to get out as much of the loose material as you can, then sprinkle the baking soda on the inside of the grill tub to get the grease off. Use the vinegar/water solution to get the baking soda to react. Once the solution has started to work, you can use the scrub brush to remove most debris. You will need the putty knife for the caked-on material, then respray it. You could also use a degreaser or oven cleaner, but the vinegar/water method is easier on the lungs.

4) If your grill has a removable tray, you will want to carefully remove it as it will have all sorts of material on it

as well. Use your vacuum to remove the loose material, then put it in the Rubbermaid tub to clean it off.

5) Put everything back together how you took it out and fire up the grill to dry everything more thoroughly.

6) You are ready to go for the next cooking session!

I hope this article is helpful to anyone who is thinking of buying a new grill. It doesn't need to be expensive; if you care for it, you can get many years out of it, and if you can afford the higher-end models, then look for the quality materials I discussed.

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

## Fly on the Wall The Greatest of Sneezes

Jason Sullivan

### Finding Ubiquitous Epiphanies

A human sneeze can explode out from our humble maw at 200 miles an hour (Bardi, online). So it's no surprise that buffets from High River to Honolulu have for decades utilized ubiquitous sneezeguards as a relative failsafe against an impromptu *achoo* (Smith, online). And just as hunger gnaws at the tummies of mammals worldwide, globalization knows no bounds for we humans. Technologies and pathogens proceed apace. Capital and profit seeking re-investment winds its way over the planet like sneeze particles wisping their way through a ventilation system. Mortality and capitalism render us all equal in the hegemonic eyes of ideology; "all that is solid melts into air" within the cultural confines





of our mass civilization (Marx, online). Just as AU allows us to study anywhere while carrying our maladies of procrastination and anxiety, global pathogens both social and medical know no bounds. Yet, sneezes can be magical, and so too can dull research yield moments of joy. Liberated from the incarceration of expectations we may discover our inner angelic essence and rekindle our greatest academic ambitions.

The world is certainly our oyster, research-wise. While webs and nets are used to corral and catch, and the internet can sauce us over with distractions, the potentials remain boundless. And so too do our humble hometowns and those of our friends! Shucks, the first time I saw the channel *Al Jazeera* on a TV was at a scrumptious Donair shop in High River, Alberta. And some of the best conversations I've had with new Canadians from India were in Golden, BC. So, in a historical moment when global travel has physically stymied our movements, the cultural colostomy bag (if you will) that gathers and congeals all of humanity continues to provide a thin barrier between our human societies and our earthly reality.

We filter our world and our studies through ideology even as those same ideologies restrict our understanding of reality. As Louis Althusser put it, "defines ideology as "our imaginary relation to our real conditions of existence" (Althusser in Benson, online). The reality that we know best, then, is the reality of our lives as they pass before our eyes. Our studies give us a chance to grow a new self and one aspect of that is the ability to take new curiosity out into the world with us and into all that we read. Sometimes it takes a proverbial sneeze to set us straight.

### **Time as Essential Commodity**

As ideological beliefs form our views, wherever we go in reality, time is there too. Time marches on like ants in a sugar-seeking line or seeds sprouting in a mad rush to sunlight. We can learn something from flowers in the sun; and, recalling that the sun can cause a person to sneeze, put our momentary selves in historical perspective while enjoying each magical moment of life.

While a human sneeze is only a moment in time, one it was once believed could lead to death if it wasn't allowed to burst forth, the irruptive force of a sneeze is one of many instances where we can gain new clarity on our life and our learning. So let us to pause when the present tense in our plague-ridden times seems overbearing.

Under it all, there we are, or were, and only a shock or a sneeze snaps us out of our stream of normality. Raw reality in mind, our studies too can then seem like a series of fractal moments of bliss of consternation, punctuated by long draws on the Gandalf pipe of serenity and excellence. We aren't going to remember the small things about attaining our degree when we one day receive it, but it's the special moments along the way that will matter most. Hopefully, they're illuminating moments; they will be if we aim for them, maybe.

We read and write the book of our life even when it feels like our focus is on tangible learning objectives and essay outlines. Henry Miller once wrote that: "I believe that today more than ever a book should be sought after even if it has only one great page in it. We must search for fragments, splinters, toenails, anything that has ore in it, anything that is capable of resuscitating the body and the soul." (Miller, online).

Flowers and feelings and reading unite in the most unlikely of places. The key is to keep our eyes open, to keep reading and keep being and to embrace the fact that it's okay to sneeze as it's okay to skim read or open a book to a random page. And so it was, with gleeful recklessness, that I opened a re-translated and Canadian-printed version of a Jacques Derrida classic that had never



crossed my mind's path before. The book, titled *Glas*, had even received a new name in its new English iteration: *Clang*. And, like the sound of an oddly-tuned bell or wind chimes meeting a dust devil, Geoffrey Bennington and David Wills, reminded us that one subject of this book, named Jean Genet, was to bring us to hermeneutic fruition by way of juxtaposing horticultural narratives within the all-too human realm of modern alienation:

"On Genet's side, there is first the etiolated condition of the monochrome carceral universe, which is conversely enhanced by the colorful characters who inhabit it, by the florid language that describes it, and by the natural beauty of wisteria, tea-rose and hawthorn that abounds in its rural ambience. His comrade inmates represent the abject detritus of respectable society, but the fetid quarantine of their lives comes alternately to be celebrated or redeemed as a type of religion, and indulged as the site of overwhelming dejection and nostalgic desire." (Bennington & Wills in Derrida, xv).

To all normality and lack of historical awareness Genet seems to prescribe a bold *achoo!*

Thus, joyful times meet existential awe if we remain open to beauty within our realm. At AU, the one thing we cannot do if we are to overcome the fear and trembling of our cultural climate and our own struggles with individualized study, is to lose ecstatic interest in the minutiae of our studies. In even the most random moments of reading pleasure, in the tiny and minor footnotes of our textbooks or in our advance reading research for a future essay, we may find the one thing that grand narratives and media mythology never can quite sell us: the magic of being right here and right now, paddle in hand, on this wonderful stream of life.

And if a sneeze propels us, so be it, for the scholastic cosmos is surely teeming with stars lit by eureka moments of discourse by countless solitary minds who in a moment's time, itself uncounted other than by the seasonal sundials of ephemeral flowers, alighted on some magical conception of where they were at in the biggest of pictures.

(Dedicated to my dear wife who has taught me to see the beauty in flowers and in life in a way that no textbook ever could!)

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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.



## Council Connection May 21, 2021 Meeting

## Kent Provost



The meeting began at 6:29 pm with all of the AUSU staff and councillors present, except Councillor Regan Johnson who was running late.

Vice President External Karen Fletcher led the group in giving respectful acknowledgement of the use of traditional indigenous lands. The evening's agenda and minutes from the previous meeting were passed unanimously, and after more unanimous agreement to pass changes to policies on respect in the workplace and terms of reference for the Member Engagement and Communications Committee, the more substantive elements of the meeting got under way.

### Annual Report

Executive Director Jodi Campbell led the discussion on the council's annual report, noting that it is usually approved in April

but with Communications and Member Services Coordinator Ashley Janes coming on board to help, he wanted to make sure there was extra time for her input. He commented that the report used a similar template to the previous one, but with many new elements in it due to the novel situation presented by COVID. He ended by lauding Ashley for her ability to contribute to the document containing nearly a year's worth of previous content, having only worked on the project for a month. This report was also approved with unanimous agreement.

### Finance Committee Appointment

Director Campbell continued holding the floor as he called for the reappointment of Mark Toews to the Finance Committee as a student-at-large voting member. He stated, "Mark has been on the committee for the past couple of years. He has done a wonderful job of participating and being engaged. When we talked to him about the potential to be re-appointed, he was very eager to extend his opportunity to work with Vice President Finance and Administration Almigdad Eldoma and the rest of the committee. Students-at-large are eligible to renew their appointments for two years after their first. This will be Mark's third year and he's done a wonderful job so far."

This section of the meeting ended with a motion to appoint Vice President External Karen Fletcher to the Awards Committee as a voting member, replacing President Stacey Hutchings in the role. President Hutchings thanked Councillor Fletcher for offering to take the role off her hands, as she is very busy with the main aspects of her work as president. Both motions were passed unanimously.

### Integrated Learning Environment

The President had no comments to give about her own report, pausing briefly to note the resignations of Councillors Monique Durette and Darcie Fleming before passing the floor to

Councillor Fletcher and Vice President Community and Wellness Natalia Iwanek for the VP External Report.

The focal point here was the amount of time the SU spent looking at the new Integrated Learning Environment in development as a replacement for Moodle. One exciting feature the software will support is the ability for students to message each other. Councillor Fletcher expressed concern about the potential for abuse the feature creates, and asked the ILE development committee about whether there would be the ability to report users for harassing behaviour or block them. When the response was that they were hoping these situations wouldn't occur, she insisted that even though much of AU's learning environment is a "digital campus", it needs to be a safe one, which requires proactivity and having controls in place. She was told by the Deputy Provost that the supplier of the software had been consulted and assurance was given that her concerns would be accommodated. Councillor Eldoma's time in April was similarly dedicated to ILE workshopping. He expressed excitement from seeing staff from all faculties together testing out the software, working out an integrated faceplate of how the environment will look, and generating a solid timeline of when it will be done.

Councillor Iwanek commented on the busyness that transitioning to her new role has caused. She has spent much of her time since the previous meeting attending an Alberta Student Leader Caucus and a diversity and inclusion conference, the latter of which is a first for the SU. This segment ended at 6:49 pm with Councillor Johnson joining the call.

### **Executive Director's Report**

Director Campbell opened the discussion of his report by remarking that everyone is aware that April brings a new awards season. He said, "the awards committee is doing a great deal of work with the spike of activity due primarily to the May cycle coming up. The staff are busy processing awards applications, then the committee's work will be to review them. There is \$50,000 in award money to be distributed, and that amount has doubled for the second cycle in a row." Some of the Director's time since the previous session was spent in transition sessions for new executives on the team, which he thanked Governance and Advocacy Coordinator Duncan Wojtaszek for helping to set up. He concluded by reminding those present that the AUSU Council by-election will soon be run, and there were only a small number of days until the nominations opened.

### **Recognition and Acknowledgements**

Councillor Johnson recognized Councillor Katy Lowe for her work on the awards committee over the last year.

President Hutchings pointed out that Coordinator Janes had finished her first month in her new position, saying, "she has done a great job taking on such a robust role and the organization doesn't seem to have skipped a beat, so props for that."

Councillor Iwanek similarly wanted to recognize Councillor Fletcher for her first month in her new role as Vice President External, noting the large amount of learning required in it. She also thanked Councillor Eldoma for work on the Finance Committee and President Hutchings for her work on the Virtual Food Assistance Program, which she started.

Councillor Fletcher thanked President Hutchings for her networking setups for the Canadian Alliance of Student Associations (CASA) conference. This allowed both of them to have the chance to talk to other schools' SUs to see what their interests are and how they can help each other. She noted that the President has better small talk skills than she does, which was helpful to her for AUSU to connect with other organizations.



The segment ended with Director Campbell stating, “You look at the organization and you start to see the momentum we’re gathering. Whether it’s the evolution of the respect in the workplace policy, the thriving of the awards program, or one of many other examples. I just want to take a moment to give kudos to everyone involved for all their hard work. I think the most important thing to keep in mind is at the core, the AUSU is for the students of the university, and we would benefit from keeping the perspective of providing services for them in mind.”

### Questions and Answers

Managing Editor of the Voice Magazine Karl Lowe had two questions. First, he noticed that in the annual report there is a budgetary surplus of about \$200,000, and he was curious about what the SU planned to do with it whether in terms of spending or budgeting.

Councillor Eldoma was the first to reply, saying that the surplus was on the SU’s radar, and that they would be allocating extra funds to awards and bursaries, trying to find different, creative ways to spend it on scholarships and conferences, and that it would be discussed in further detail in the forthcoming finance meeting. He added that the surplus would likely continue to grow, as more revenue would be coming in from storage and office space that is no longer in use due to COVID, and that the university is still seeing higher than projected enrollment at the moment.

Director Campbell noted that for a couple of years prior to 2021, there was a perfect storm of events to create this surplus. In 2019 the SU fee was raised from \$3 per credit to \$3.75 per credit and even before the pandemic the university was seeing a ton of growth in enrollment. The larger increase in enrollment due to COVID was difficult to budget for, but the main goal is to put money back into student services. They have already made some headway toward the goal by donating to the AU emergency bursary program, injecting \$100,000 back into awards, contests, initiatives, and in general trying to get money back into students’ pockets.

Second, Editor Low wanted to know if a more specific timeline for the new ILE was available, and generally whether there was more information about that project. Councillor Eldoma responded that the goal is to test pilot the software on 10 courses with faculty in June and to have an official launch by Fall 2022.

Councillor Amber McDuffe wanted to know about whether SU council meetings could be livestreamed on the organization’s Facebook page in the future. President Hutchings wanted to take a look at doing this, noting that other SUs livestream meetings, that it reduces the pressure of coming into a Zoom room, and that she would be interested in pursuing this option pending approval of the rest of the council.

Director Campbell ended the substantive discussion of the meeting by pointing out the gold ribbon backgrounds that the majority of participants had in their Zoom backgrounds. He thanked everyone for making the effort to put them up, explaining that they represent a campaign for social change involving reducing anti-Asian hate and racism.

### Next Meeting

The meeting came to a close at about 7:13 pm. The council will reconvene on June 17, 2021 at 6:30 pm MST. Please write [governance@ausu.org](mailto:governance@ausu.org) if you wish to attend, or if you want other information about the council and their activities.

*Kent Provost gained an honourable mention in the Voice Magazine’s fiction contest of 2021, and now does the AUSU Council meetings.*



**Karen Lam**

**Course Exam**

*AU courses, up close*

## **Course Exam**

**Karen Lam**

### **ASTR 310 (Planetary Science)**

*If you have a course that you would like to see a Course Exam article written for or you recently took a course that you would like to recommend to other AU students, please feel free to reach out with the course name and number, and any questions or feedback you may have. We'll be happy to write about it in our next Course Exam article.*

ASTR 310 is a three-credit astronomy course “about the physics of the Solar System. It is an intermediate-level astronomy course, meant to be taken after ASTR 210, and is for students who want to study planetary astronomy in a deeper way.” ASTR 310 further expands on topics of ASTR 210, “concentrating on the planets and smaller bodies found in our own solar neighborhood, the Solar System.” The pre-requisite for the course is ASTR 210 (or formerly known as ASTR 200) or ASTR 205 and MATH 265, PHYS 200 and MATH 265, or consent from the course coordinator. For students who have not completed ASTR 210, if they have a strong mathematical background they may ask for permission to take the course. The course is also available for challenge.

### **Who Should Take This Course and Why**

For this course we had the opportunity to interview Karen Fletcher, currently working full time as AUSU’s VP External; meaning she gets to advocate for students to AU as well as to the provincial and federal government, which she loves! Karen wants getting an education to be a great experience for everyone. Karen is currently taking a Bachelor of Science in Applied Math part time and going into her fourth year. Aside from school and being AUSU’s VP External, Karen also has three kids who have been out of school for a year now because of COVID, so things are pretty busy for her!

Karen stated, “Astr310 covers astronomy in our solar system, answering questions such as: How did the solar system form? How can we know what happened at the start of our solar system? Why is each planet different? How do we know about what’s inside other planets and astronomical bodies? Why do planets and other things in space move the way they do? How did people figure that out?” For anyone who has a strong interest in the solar system or finding an answer to these questions, this course is for you! Karen also added, “If you have taken physics and are looking for a senior science option I would highly recommend this, I did really enjoy it.”

### **Course, Assignment, Midterm and Final Exam Details**

The course consists of five units with Unit One being Introduction and Overview, Unit Two: Stellar and Planetary Formation, Unit Three: Small Bodies, Unit Four: Planetary Interiors and Surfaces, and Unit Five: Planetary Atmospheres. The course consists of five assignments each worth 6% of the overall mark. The assignments are more challenging than the exams, according to Karen, she recommends students not to worry about exams but make sure to study for them. The assignments rely on physics/mathematics knowledge, so it is recommended students have a physics/mathematics background before taking the course. There is a midterm and final exam each worth 35% each. The midterm and final exam are a combination of short and long answer questions.

### **How to Be Successful in the Course**

**Introducing Course Professor – Dr. Martin Connors**

Dr. Martin Connors' history with AU goes way back, more than half of AU's existence, since he started tutoring in 1988. Dr. Connors was employed running computers in research support at the University of Alberta. In 1998, Dr. Connors got a Ph.D. in the area he previously supported, and by then he had already been on faculty at AU for two years. While a tutor Dr. Connors had developed ASTR 205 as a popular level astronomy course, and once onboard he was also in charge of the ASTR 210 science stream course, the big MATH 215 statistics course, and the PHYS introductory physics courses. Dr. Connors became a Canada Research Chair and turned mostly to research, part of it on innovative methods in distance education physics, but mostly about auroras. About this time Dr. Connors supervised development of ASTR 310 to give a more advanced astronomy course.

### **Tips from Course Professor**

When we asked Dr. Connors for his advice to students for the course, he stated, "ASTR 310 is about planetary science, which blends quite a few fields. It takes a mathematical approach (GEOL 415 is also about planetary science but more from a geology perspective). So, this is not a course to be taken without the necessary preparation. We require an introductory astronomy course and calculus, and really one should have first year physics. Of these, calculus is likely the most important, in part because it is used in a lot of parts of the course, but also because even the non-calculus parts use a lot of equations, and calculus makes one more comfortable with that. This is not a course about the Solar System, but instead about how to understand the Solar System."

### **Student Tips from Karen Fletcher**

When we spoke with AUSU VP External, Karen, and asked her about her experience with the course and if she had any tips to share, she stated, "So, before I took the course they didn't require introductory to physics as a prerequisite, and since I didn't have that I struggled a ton in the assignments. (They've changed it now, so it's clear you need physics to take the course, the course coordinator really listened to my concerns about this, so you don't need to worry about this!). I actually did really well in the assignments, but I was basically teaching myself physics while doing them. If you've taken first year physics and calculus you should be okay. The assignments were really interesting, and over-all I did really enjoy the course. The most challenging part was not having a physics background! (But I really stuck up for you guys, so no one else should have this issue!). I'm not sure any of it was really easy, but I did really enjoy the textbook. Don't assume an open book exam means you don't have to study! You are allowed to look things up, but the exams are heavy so if you spend much time doing that you won't finish."

When we asked Karen about her experience with the course professor and tutor, she stated, "My tutor was Dr. Martin Connors for most of it and he was amazing. At the start, I was really intimidated because I had to tell him that given the assignments were so physics based I didn't think I could pass the exam, and he really heard me and accommodated that (since AU had listed another prerequisite). He was kind and encouraging and really wants his students to succeed. At the end of the course I ended up having a new tutor, Christen Bredenson, who was also very friendly and approachable. I was really impressed that when I went to them and said, "listen, it's not reasonable to let people in this course if they don't have physics because the assignments assume students have all this knowledge" that there was no push-back, they took my concerns into account and went and made sure future students wouldn't have that, which is the sort of thing I think we all want from our profs. They really see their students are people and were absolutely lovely to work with."

Thanks so much to Dr. Connors and Karen for their feedback!

### **Questions?**

If you have any further questions regarding the course, please do not hesitate to contact the Course Coordinator at [fst\\_success@athabascau.ca](mailto:fst_success@athabascau.ca). Happy studying!

*Karen's taking her Computing Science degree at AU, learning French and Korean, and is into K-pop, SF, and politics*





## Scholarship of the Week

### Digging up scholarship treasure for AU students.

**Scholarship name:** Progressive Automations Scholarship Program

**Sponsored by:** Progressive Automations

**Deadline:** June 30, 2021

**Potential payout:** \$1000

**Eligibility restriction:** Applicants must be enrolled for September 2021 in a full-time engineering program at a recognized Canadian or American university or college.

**What's required:** An online application, accompanied by an email containing a 700-word personal essay, a project/application proposal, proof of enrollment in 2021 semester, high-school transcripts, and a photo of the applicant.

**Tips:** Read the Requirements section carefully for details on the application requirements.

**Where to get info:** [www.progressiveautomations.ca/pages/scholarship-program](http://www.progressiveautomations.ca/pages/scholarship-program)



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

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

#### AthaU Facebook Group

Yup, AU students can get student ID. A query about student ID prompts responses that point to the link to request an AU student ID card.

#### Discord

The AU Student channel adds a series of voice/video study rooms, including program-specific rooms, and Pomodoro-timer rooms. Details on the #server-announcements channel.

#### Twitter

@austudentsunion tweets: "Applications are due for our EDI Committee on June 16! Are you passionate about improving the experience of underserved and underrepresented students? Looking to gain committee or governance experience? Then check out this amazing leadership opportunity! <https://bit.ly/3ppcJxr>."

#### YouTube

Grab the tissues! When AU student Katy Lowe posted a plea for help staging an early grad ceremony so her ailing mother could attend, AU brought a personalized Katy Lowe Convocation right to Katy's doorstep.



## Post Traumatic Growth

Marie Well



My favorite medical doctor posted on social media about a condition I never heard before: post traumatic growth (PTG). The doctor claimed that a small percentage of people experience PTG. Basically, with PTG, people come out of trauma happier, more spiritual, and more appreciative of life. PTG is rooted in the same causes as post-traumatic stress disorder, but with beneficial outcomes.

I have insight into post traumatic growth. And I'd like to share a bit of it with you.

I underwent PTG over an event I don't wish to disclose. The trauma of the event rocked my core. But I came out of it happier, more successful, more spiritual. I did so by refusing to feel anything but unconditional love toward my antagonists.

And, even though I entered a new shaky normal after the trauma, I grew happier--better—in every way

imaginable.

Yesterday, after reading the medical doctor's post on PTG, I commented that, to truly achieve PTG, we must manifest unconditional love toward our aggressors. Further to this, in cases of natural trauma, we must feel nothing but love for mother nature. In the case of self-inflicted trauma, we must feel nothing but love for our highest selves. At least, that's how I view PTG.

I then explored PTG further within the literature. I was excited to see that PTG requires us to control our thoughts. To do so, we need to avoid any negative thoughts like worry or anger. Instead, we need to think about positive outcomes, best-case scenarios, power to manage crisis, and past successes, according to [The Harvard Business Review](#).

But I think controlling our minds also requires virtuous thoughts, such as empathy and appreciation. Controlling our minds, in my opinion, requires exclusive focus on joyful, happy thoughts. Thus, to achieve PTG after trauma, snuff out all anger, jealousy, resentment, tension, judgment, and blame, even if these states seem incredibly justified. Nothing should justify us losing our happiness. Not war. Not murder. Not rape. Not death.

When we have PTG from a worst-case scenario, I know, from experience, we may no longer fear the trauma recurring. The first step to this state of PTG, in my opinion, is unconditional love.

Any trauma can be turned into a cataclysmic ground for growth. Anything that makes us sad or angry holds the opportunity to make us happy or peaceful. Anything that gives us nightmares can bring us joy.

PTG requires we surrender all our baggage for love. In the end, we gain and never lose. A present-day saint, in my view, said something like, "It's harder to do the right thing, but when we do the right thing, we gain ten times the reward."





Dear  
Barb

Barbara Godin

## The Green-Eyed Friend

*Dear Barb:*

*A couple of years ago I met a friend at work, and we immediately became BFF. We had a lot in common and both loved hiking, biking, and most outdoor activities, however in the last few months things have changed. She has been making a lot of negative comments towards me. I have had a few good things happen and it almost seems like she's jealous of me. For example, I met a really great guy who I am spending a lot of time with. I also won some money on a scratch ticket. We had both been buying tickets and talking about what we would do if we won. I didn't win enough to change my life, but I was able to pay off my car and some other debts and put some money in the bank. I even gave my friend a few thousand dollars. In addition I got a promotion at work and now I am in a supervisory position. Lisa is almost making me feel guilty for these good things that are happening in my life. I really like her and don't want to lose her friendship. Is there anything I can do to make her feel better about the positives in my life without causing her to feel that I am putting her down?*

*Looking for some advice, Ella.*

Hi Ella:

Congratulations on your good fortune. I can understand your friend being jealous or envious of your good fortune. It's important that you address these issues with your friend and find a way to move past the jealousy and insecurities as soon as possible, before they become unmanageable. Ask yourself if there is anything you have done to cause your friend to feel this way. Perhaps boasting too much? That might cause your friend to resent your good fortune. Also, maybe she was hoping to move into a supervisory position as well. While she may be happy for you, she also feels envious; these are hard emotions to process. Assure your friend that your relationship will not change and that you will always be a supportive friend. Hopefully, when the time is right, your friend will open up to you about how she feels. Listen to her and validate her feelings. Be supportive and encouraging while assuring her that she will eventually meet someone, or get the next promotion. Perhaps you have been struggling to achieve this supervisory position, if so share your difficulties. Try not to appear as if your achievements have been without great effort. Maybe you had a few bad relationships before meeting your present partner; share that information with your friend. She will see that everything hasn't been handed to you on a silver platter; you have also had your challenges, as most people have. On the other hand if you and your friend are not able to come to some level of understanding, it may be time to end the relationship and move on, otherwise it will bring you down and not be beneficial to either of you. Hopefully this information has been helpful.

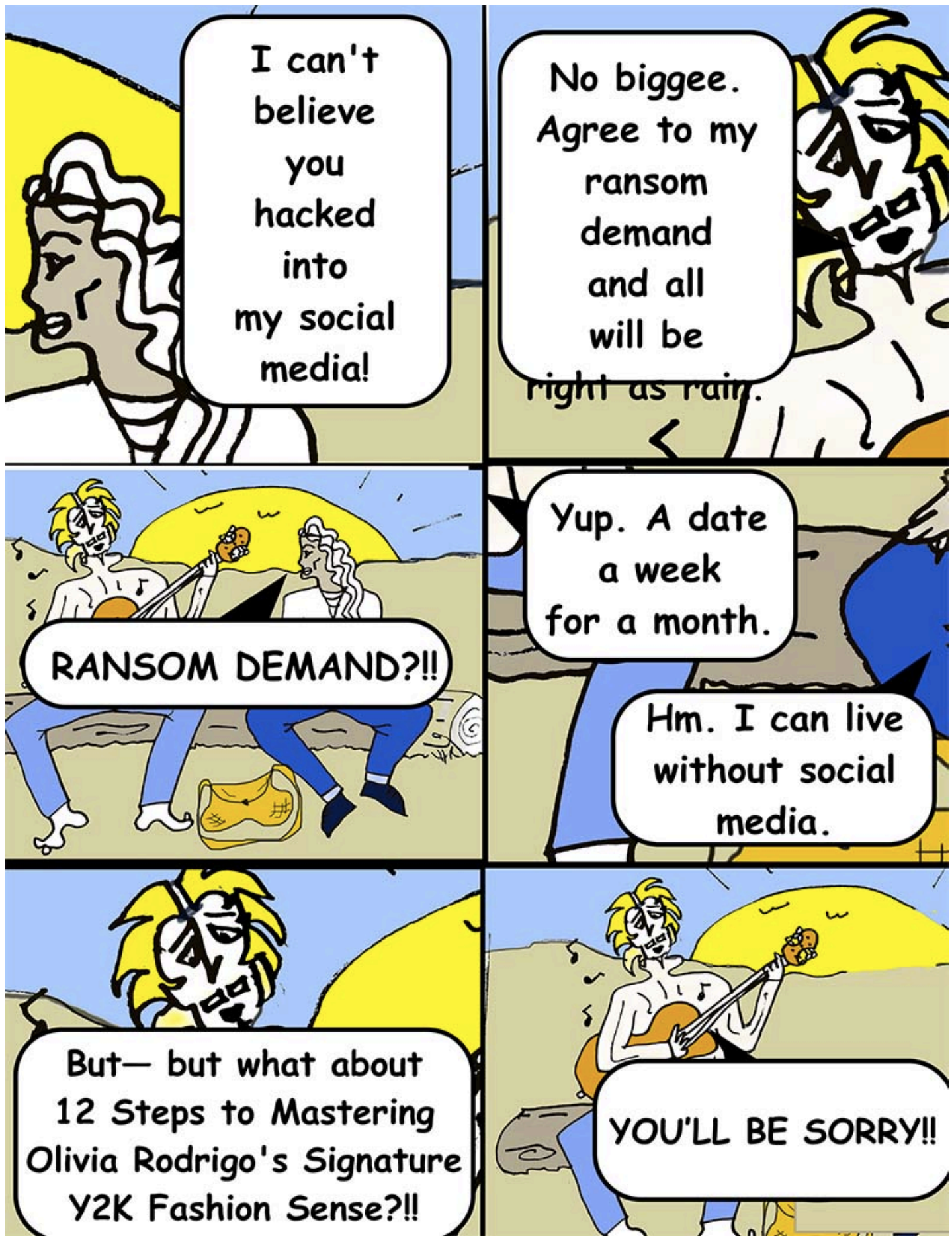
*Email your questions to [voice@voicemagazine.org](mailto:voice@voicemagazine.org). Some submissions may be edited for length or to protect confidentiality; your real name and location will never be printed. This column is for entertainment only. The author is not a professional counsellor and this column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





Poet Maeve  
Ransom Demand

Wanda Waterman



This update is provided by AUSU. The Voice does not create or edit this content. Contact [services@ausu.org](mailto:services@ausu.org) with any questions about this article.

## IMPORTANT DATES

- June 11: [Virtual Convocation 2021](#)
- June 18-25: [AUSU celebrates Pride](#)
- June 24: [By-Election voting opens](#)
- June 28: [AUSU Annual General Meeting](#)

### STUDENT COUNCIL BY-ELECTION

**GET INVOLVED**  
**MAKE A**  
**DIFFERENCE.**



**Meet Your Candidates!**



The nomination period is closed and it's time to meet your candidates! [These AU students](#) are eager to get involved, gain experience, and represent fellow learners as part of [an amazing team](#)!

AUSU student councillors represent AU undergrads and advocate on their behalf. They also guide your students' union in providing services and support for AU students and contribute to creating a vibrant online student community.

Now that the candidates are set, your chance to vote by email will arrive in your inbox on June 24th with voting open until June 28th at 11:59 pm MT.

Passionate about improving the experience of underserved and underrepresented students? Looking to gain governance experience? Then [check out this amazing leadership opportunity](#) with AUSU!

The Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) Committee is formed by AUSU Council and promotes awareness and visibility of EDI core values at AUSU. The committee identifies specific EDI needs and supports the executive committee in their advocacy efforts to have those needs met.

To join AUSU's EDI Committee, email your resume and a brief summary of why you are interested to Duncan Wojtaszek at [governance@ausu.org](mailto:governance@ausu.org).

You must be a current AUSU member to apply.

**Deadline: June 16<sup>th</sup>, 2021.**



Athabasca University has organized for you, your friends and your family, an incredible celebration that incorporates the well-loved traditional elements of convocation with a virtual twist. We can't wait to welcome you into the Class of 2021!

More than that, we'll be celebrating with you! AUSU is the proud sponsor of the virtual photo booth that will capture memories of your big day. Make sure you come by and say hi - we're so proud of you!



AUSU will be hosting a formal [Annual General Meeting](#) on June 28th, 2021, at 5 pm MT.

All students are welcome to attend! Join AUSU Council and staff to review the [2021 Annual Report](#), audited financial statements, and highlights and achievements from the 2019/2020 fiscal year.

If you have any questions about the event, please contact [governance@ausu.org](mailto:governance@ausu.org).

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# CLASSIFIEDS

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Classifieds are free for AU students!  
Contact [voice@voicemagazine.org](mailto:voice@voicemagazine.org) for more information.

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## THE VOICE

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