

# THE VOICE

MAGAZINE

Vol 22 Issue 22 2014-05-30

## Meeting the Minds

Dr. Shauna Reckseidler-Zenteno, II

## Jeans and Germs

What's in your Levi's?

## Write for Us

Eight Reasons Why

*Plus:*

*From Where I Sit  
Burning Student Debt  
and much more!*



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# LETTERS TO THE EDITOR



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

## EDITORIAL

Karl Low



## Controversial Politics

The last few weeks, there's been a lot of noise around Justin Trudeau's statement that to run as a Liberal candidate for MP, you must be ready to vote pro-choice if that type of legislation should come forwards while in Parliament. This started a long debate between people who were trying to call this dictatorial behavior, and of course it brought up the entire argument about Canada's current legislation on abortion (that is, that there is none)

To start, suggesting that this is dictatorial behavior seems completely off base to me. He's not strong-arming anybody to vote pro-choice, he's giving advance notice that he may do so, and that if you don't want to get strong-armed into doing that, you shouldn't run as a Liberal candidate. This strikes me as far more preferable than constituents having to wait until the issue actually comes forward in parliament to find out what view their MP holds.

The more interesting issue to me, is the debate over abortion. I'm firmly pro-choice. I don't like the idea of abortions, but I don't like the idea of giving the government control over a person's body even more. If we let the government tell us that our bodies and organs must be used in support of an unborn life, what justification is there if we don't want them to do the same thing for somebody who needs an organ donation? You'll note this completely avoids the whole question about when an unborn organism becomes a human, because I don't think that's the relevant question. The more relevant question, to me, is, do I own my own body or not? If I do, then any legislation that takes away from that is bad legislation.

But beyond the argument of it being a human, these days I see a lot of people saying that they're fine with abortions, so long as the state doesn't pay the medical costs at all. I always wonder at this argument, because when looked at fully, it's really an argument against any state medical benefits at all. It can be argued that almost every health condition and every accident that we sustain is, in part, caused by our own actions. We smoked too much, ate a poor diet, or weren't looking in the right direction when we crossed the street. Other than purely genetic issues, you can trace illness and damage back to our own actions or lack thereof, so arguing that the medical treatment for one particular action shouldn't be covered while others are – that we'll pay for lung-cancer treatments for a smoker, or fixing the broken-arm of a construction worker who slipped, fall prey to the exact same argument as not wanting to pay for an abortion caused by someone have sex. They should have been more careful.

I also find that there's a lot of mischaracterization of the sides of the debate. Pro-choice is often called pro-abortion, when it rarely is. And anti-choice is generally mischaracterized as pro-life. Fortunately, you can tell the difference immediately simply by asking whether an abortion is acceptable following a rape. If not, then the person may be pro-life. It's an uncomfortable position, but one that I can respect. If a rape is an acceptable cause for an abortion however, then you know that the person you're dealing with is simply anti-choice. A woman is allowed to choose to have sex or to choose not to have a baby, but both choices are too many. I generally don't find much use in talking with those people any further than that.

## Why I Write for *The Voice* (And You Should, Too)

Barbara Lehtiniemi



Have you ever committed yourself to a course of action in order to force yourself to take on a challenge? Last year, I e-mailed the then-new editor of *The Voice Magazine* and said I'd like to write for the magazine. I pressed "send" quickly, before I could manufacture reasons why not to.

Six months and more than 30 articles later, I'm still writing. After my first article, "Essay Avoidance: The Fine Art of Procrastination," was published last November, I decided to write an article for every issue. I had no idea if I could compose original articles week after week, but I found looming deadlines strangely motivating. Reflecting on my first six months, I realize that, despite the difficulty in discovering a topic to write about every week, it's been an overwhelmingly positive experience. Here's why:

**It pays.** We're taught not to be mercenary, but money does make the world go round. Writing for *The Voice Magazine* pays. It's probably the biggest single reason why I can answer the challenge of putting out an article every week. It's not easy, but the pay I get for these articles offsets a good chunk of my AU tuition.

**Writing makes me a better writer.** Practice makes perfect in many endeavours. The more I write, the better I get. Any writing is good practice for any other writing. Writing articles for *The Voice* gives me the ability to write better essays, a skill AU courses give me plenty of opportunity to practice.

**Free writing coach.** The Voice's editor, Karl, gives me writing advice—for free. He tells me what works, what doesn't, and what can be better and how. And he does it nicely. For free.

**Looks great on a résumé.** I've been in the workforce for over 30 years and have been on both sides of the hiring equation. Anything that you can put on a résumé that will distinguish you from all the other candidates has great value.

**I'm building a portfolio.** You never know where life's path is going to take you. A portfolio of published writing is a tangible asset that does not depreciate.

**Writing has cachet.** Writers seem to have some aura around them (to non-writers, anyway.) "I am a writer" invokes visions of an intellectual free-spirit, toiling away at a future literary classic in a hut at the bottom of the garden. "I am a writer" forestalls any questions about what I write. I could be writing recipes, raunchy e-books, or top-ten novels; nobody dares to ask. They just think it's cool that I write.

**Research makes me smarter.** Because I mainly write student-focused articles, I need to read student-focused material. Researching learning methods, student services, and current issues benefits me as a student. It also gives me a legitimate excuse for indulging in a book or surfing the internet: I'm actually researching. Honest.

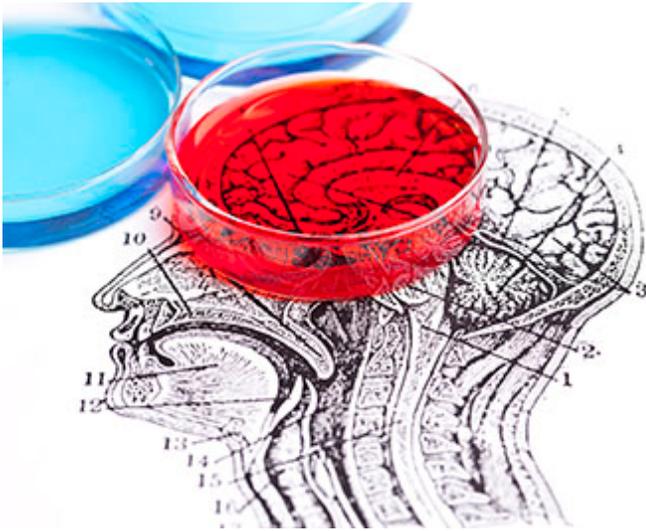
**Everyone's got a voice.** Everybody has something to say. If you're interested in a topic, you can be certain someone else is too. Not every student is interested in the same subjects, but every student is here to learn.

Now it's your turn to seize an opportunity for growth. You've got a voice and readers would love to hear it. Contact [voice@voicemagazine.org](mailto:voice@voicemagazine.org) before you create reasons not to.

*Barbara Lehtiniemi is a writer, photographer, and AU student. She lives on a windswept rural road in Eastern Ontario*

## Primal Numbers Jeans and Germs

S.D. Livingston



We live, arguably, in one of the cleanest times in history. From high-efficiency washers to hand sanitizers, there are machines and detergents to purify everything in sight. But in the midst of all this spotlessness comes a seemingly contrary piece of advice: you shouldn't be washing your jeans. Is it a germ, unhealthy idea—or some welcome common sense in this era of super sanitation?

The no-wash advice comes from Chip Bergh. He's the CEO of Levi Strauss and Co., and someone who knows a little something about denim. As this [CBC blog reports](#), Bergh was one

of the speakers at the Brainstorm Green sustainability conference this May, where he "beckoned attendees to forgo the washing machine in favour of 'spot cleaning' their jeans with a 'sponge or toothbrush.'" Other high-profile names in fashion, including Tommy Hilfiger, have offered the same advice.

On the surface, the idea makes sense. Keeping your jeans out of all those rough-and-tumble cycles in the washer and dryer will take a lot of strain off the fabric and make it last longer. And not washing over the life cycle of just a single pair of jeans will save plenty of water and electricity.

There's even a simple way to keep your jeans germ free and smelling fresh: put them in the freezer. The method has the earmarks of an urban legend, but some people swear by it. The logic is that the cold kills any germs that might accumulate on your trusty denim, while at the same time it gets rid of any unpleasant odours.

All in all, it sounds like a brilliant solution that's good for the environment and your wallet, too. Until, that is, you look a little closer.

For starters, you might want to think twice about putting unwashed jeans next to the food in your freezer. That's because, contrary to popular myth, cold temperatures won't kill the bacteria on them. As the *Smithsonian Magazine* [notes](#), many types of bacteria can happily hibernate in spite of your attempts to freeze them. Even if you do manage to kill a few thousand, "it takes only one survivor to repopulate your jeans when they warm up."

So not only will your jeans still be harbouring their original bacteria, but the only thing you'll accomplish is to spread those bacteria to the place you store your groceries, where they could happily multiply on your food containers and be transferred from, say, ice-cream lids to spoons or bowls.

The other thing to consider in the no-wash debate is the source of the dirt you'll accumulate. For instance, many of the bacteria on jeans live on the dead skin cells that you shed onto your clothes. Go months, or a year, without giving your jeans a proper wash and it adds up to a lot of dead skin cells.

Then there are all the assorted goodies you pick up when your jeans come in contact with chairs in restaurants or theatres, and surfaces in other public places. Perhaps a trace of dog feces on your hem from that shortcut

across the grass. Or the accumulated film of formula, runny noses, and countless spills that are part of life with babies and toddlers. And plenty of people wear their jeans to do hard physical work—everything from welding in factories to mucking out stalls on a farm. The kind of work that means real, honest to goodness sweat.

Once all that accumulated grime (and accompanying odours) gets ground in deep to fibres, it's next to impossible to get it out. Even in a yearly spin cycle.

So as much as the idea of pampering your jeans has an air of romanticism about it—the notion of a trusted friend carrying a lifetime of memories—I think I'll stick to throwing mine in the weekly wash. Because the only thing I want living in my Levis is me.

*S.D. Livingston is the author and creator of the Madeline M. Mystery Series for kids, as well as several books for older readers. Visit her [website](#) for information on her writing.*

## Click of the Wrist

## Motivated Much?

**How to get all that coursework done by 2016? How to keep the budget balanced this year? How to lose those five pounds before summer starts? We're told that if we just motivate ourselves, we'll be on the way to reaching our goals. But it's not always that simple, is it? This week's links take a closer look at the science and psychology behind motivation.**

### Good Cop, Bad Cop

What's more motivating—fear or praise? Experts disagree, but this *Psychology Today* article explains why both have their value.

### Short Term

Motivation can be fickle—we start out all fired up, then fizzle quickly as time passes. This *Huffington Post* blog piece argues that motivation really only works in the short term, and that changing our beliefs will be a lot more successful in helping us achieve our goals.

### App for That

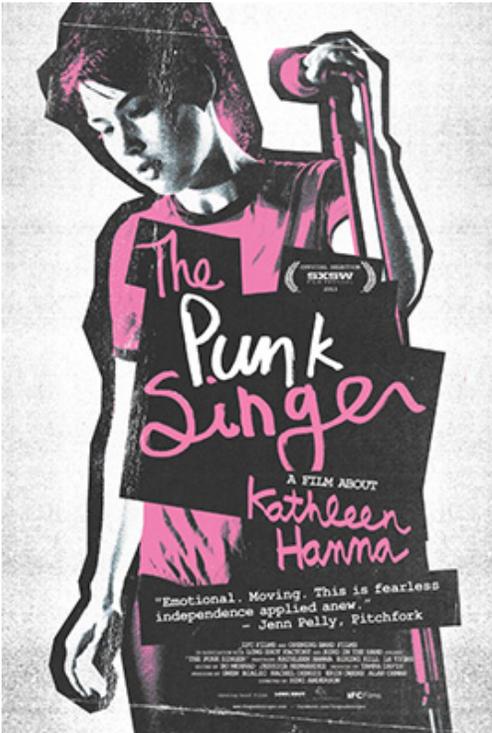
Productivity apps abound—a simple Google search will turn up lists aplenty. But who do they work best for, and why? This fascinating article and video explain gamification, the process of turning real-life situations and problems into games. If you're interested in digging deeper, be sure to check out this [course on gamification](#) as well, freely available from Coursera.



## Mindful Bard

Wanda Waterman

Books, Music, and Film to Wake Up Your Muse and Help You Change the World



**Film:** *The Punk Singer, a Film About Kathleen Hanna*

**Director:** Sini Anderson

### The Cordelia Factor in Third Wave Feminist Punk Rock

"BECAUSE we are angry at a society that tells us Girl = Dumb, Girl = Bad, Girl = Weak.

"BECAUSE we are unwilling to let our real and valid anger be diffused and/or turned against us via the internalization of sexism as witnessed in girl/girl jealousy and self defeating girlytype behaviors.

"BECAUSE I believe with my wholeheartmindbody that girls constitute a revolutionary soul force that can, and will change the world for real."  
-Kathleen Hanna in "The Riot Grrrl Manifesto"

Kathleen Hanna, veteran of third wave feminist punk rock and founding member of Riot Grrrls, has been asked to speak at a pro-choice rally. We see her mount the stage stiffly and hesitantly. We watch as she grimaces in pain and tries to get the words out. We have no idea what's wrong. And neither does she.

When you see her journey from the beginning, you can well sympathize with her sense of injury. Kathleen Hanna started out by demanding to be heard in a world that didn't want to listen. Her personal suffering quickly became political as she discovered that the world was full of women with the same stories as hers and worse. She was speaking for them, too.

Hanna had a successful recording career that began in the early nineties and quickly developed an enthusiastic cult following. She was an amazing songwriter, magically wedding cogent lyrics with exciting rhythms and melodies almost too listenable to be punk, and her performances were mesmerizing. But, in 2005, she suddenly dropped off the radar, and, until recently, no one knew why.

Some assumed the worst. Kathleen had never been exactly Rebecca of Sunnybrook Farm; performances with her band Bikini Kill and, later, The Julie Ruin, were marked by an intense in-your-face feminist rage and a call for solidarity among women and girls.

Punk rock is probably is one of the most affirming musical genres experienced by marginalized disenfranchised youth, those who enter adolescence to find themselves living in a highly dishonest and hypocritical society. In this kind of social context the authentic heartfelt rants of punk troubadours sound like angel voices among the demon sneers.

But not everyone sees it that way, especially not the sneering demons and those in their service; the last thing they want is to get called on their covert manipulation and hidden agendas. For their twisted ideology to retain control of society they have to make it look like punk is the demonic force, not them.

To see her prancing and to hear her screaming on the stage, you'd think she was emotionally indomitable and that the whole point of her performances was to offend. So it's puzzling to see how shocked and hurt she was at all the negative feedback. Why did it hurt her so much when people got offended?

It kept hitting the fan, and this, added to tensions between the members of Bikini Kill, took all the fun of life. Kathleen eventually produced an album, *Julie Ruin*, alone in her bedroom and distributed it with the beautiful stated purpose of affirming the sacredness of the girl's bedroom as creative space.

And so for her to be accused of being against women, to be told to die by males whose egos were rattled by her forthright anger, for her to be slapped for no reason on stage by Courtney Love, and for her to be lied about in the press, was beyond her patience. Eventually she refused to speak to the media.

She soon formed a new group called The Julie Ruin. The members agreed that The Julie Ruin would be a celebration of female lives as opposed to rants against patriarchy and capitalism. It was as much a bid for emotional healing as another milestone in Hanna's creative development. It was around this time that she changed her onstage look from teenaged brat to mock-conservative businesswoman, a look that spoke worlds about her changing inner self and the evolution of feminism.

Unfortunately her message was still more often misunderstood than not.

In Shakespeare's *King Lear* the King asks his three daughters how much they love him. While his two other daughters wax rhapsodic about mountains, skies, and seas, his daughter Cordelia tells him that she loves him as meat loves salt. Furious at the perceived insult, he banishes her from his sight. In the end we see that hers had been the only true love but that her expression of this love had been profoundly misconstrued.

Kathleen Hanna is a postmodern, feminist Cordelia. Her deep sympathy for women looks like hatred against both women *and* men, her tenderness looks like malice, and her intelligent feminist ethos looks like the rage of a damaged psyche. In the end we see that she loved us so much more than we ever realized; this makes her suffering all the more poignant.

*The Punk Singer* manifests nine of the Mindful Bard's criteria for films well worth seeing.

- It's authentic, original, and delightful.
- It poses and admirably responds to questions that have a direct bearing on my view of existence.
- It harmoniously unites art with social action, saving me from both seclusion in an ivory tower and slavery to someone else's political agenda.
- It is about attainment of the true self.
- It displays an engagement with and compassionate response to suffering;
- It gives me artistic tools.
- It makes me want to be a better artist.
- It renews my enthusiasm for positive social action.
- It makes me appreciate that life is a complex and rare phenomena, making living a unique opportunity.

*Wanda also penned the poems for the artist book **They Tell My Tale to Children Now to Help Them to be Good**, a collection of meditations on fairy tales, illustrated by artist Susan Malmstrom.*

# MEETING THE MINDS

## INTERVIEWS with AU's EDUCATORS



*Dr. Shauna Reckseidler-Zenteno is an Associate Professor and Centre Chair for the Centre for Science in the Faculty of Science and Technology at Athabasca University. Currently responsible for about 800 students per year over five courses, Biology 325, 341, 401, 480 and Chemistry 301, she started with AU nine years ago in 2005. She was kind enough to consent to be interviewed by The Voice Magazine, and we talked at some length. This is the second part of our interview, you can read the first in last week's [issue](#).*

### **What is your opinion on AU's move to e-texts so far?**

Initially I had some questions. I'm not really one to worry about change or progress, usually I'm on board with any new initiative--anything we can do to make things better or more progressive. But the move to e-text involved some critical questions that had to be asked, the biggest one being accessibility to students, and the next biggest one, especially for science, keeping the texts after the courses. How are these students going to be able to keep these texts for their lifetime, so that they can refer back

to them as they move forward in their studies and careers?

It ties in with accessibility, somewhat. There are issues I've seen with companion websites for regular textbooks that caused me to worry about e-texts. Because AU doesn't run on the regular course semester system, I've had students who have lost access to websites after a couple years. I went to meet with publishers personally to encourage them to increase access or create special websites that take into account the AU system.

I feel most of those questions around e-texts have been answered, so I'm happy now. The accessibility issues have been handled, that's my understanding. We've all been told that students will be able to download any e-text on to four different devices, which they will have for the life of the device. Students will also have the ability to print if needed and can purchase a hard copy of the text at a reduced cost. Of course, we want to make sure things are linked in properly, and that it's all easy to get into and use. The e-texts do have features that are very useful such as highlighting, quizzes, and animations.

If there's one outstanding issue, it's that the publishers' formatting for e-texts is sometimes messed up. It happened with a couple of courses and it can really make the material difficult to understand. But we've already been in there telling them to fix things. I know there are other issues such as cost. A lot of the costs associated with resources aren't going to go away, even with e-texts. The university isn't pocketing money from changing to e-texts. We still have other costs covered by the learning resource fee that need to be maintained.

But I think when you have a learning resource fee, professors and coordinators should be designing their learning materials so that they fall within that fee in the first place. We have some blatant examples in the university where that fee is exceeded, and as the Chair of the Centre for Science, I have to work to make sure that people are mindful of that.

The other thing is that there might be books that are not available as e-texts, especially from smaller publishers so we may not be able to move all AU courses to e-texts. Open Educational Resources (OERs) are an area of interest that the university has been looking into for quite some time. The issue there is making sure the OERs have the rigor and content that match our course learning objectives. I have one course moving to e-text very soon, and that's BIOL 325, and will be very interested to see what students think of it.

People really need the right questions asked and the information put out there. I understand from CLDD (Centre for Learning Design and Development) that academic publishers, are moving away from print. So it might be better if we get ahead.

### **How about the shift to a call-centre model?**

Augh. I don't like that name. We don't want to call it a call-centre model, because that's got specific connotations. In the Faculty of Science and Technology (FST), how you typically define call-centre isn't what the model is. Ours is a mixed model, if you want to call it a call-centre because it goes through a central repository then you're missing that we're still using a one-on-one tutor to student model.

The faculty in FST understand the importance of the tutor-student relationship, and all of us with courses using the Student Success Centre, as it is called, elected to retain that. When more courses are rolled out into the new model, my bet is that it will be 100% of the people in science saying we need to retain the tutor-student relationship.

It's the kind of move where we should be asking what we can do to make things better. Will this increase response times for our students, will it be a more efficient system? It will definitely improve tracking, so when I, as chair, have to be involved in a student concern or issue, an appeal or something, I don't have to get a bunch of e-mails from different people to know the entire story. I'll be able to see the history of that student and all their communications. I do think it's beneficial for students too in that it will let us get a general feel for their experience as an AU student and the issues that they're dealing with in their courses. The other benefit is that students will receive answers to administrative questions by directly contacting the Student Success Centre. The new model will also allow us to see how our students are helped and make sure response times are honoured. However, change is difficult and the implementation has been hard. There have been technical issues that need to be resolved before we'll see the full potential of it, but everyone is working hard on that. One thing that makes people resistant is that it will change how tutors are paid and that's a sensitive issue.

I don't think implementation of this model has to put a block between students and tutors as some have suggested. Response times should not be different than they are now and in some cases will be better. We have to, as tutors, be vigilant to get into the new software system to use it. It is not difficult to use. My biggest priority is my students, and I sometimes have back-to-back e-mail conversations with students, and I am very prompt. Having used the new system I am now comfortable with making sure I can maintain the same response times I have with email.

**What do you think of social media use in education, is it useful?**

Yes, it is, but I don't have too much else to say about that. As I mentioned earlier we do use the AU Landing in CHEM 301 and in BIOL 325 as well. FST has a Facebook page and we have contributed to the AU YouTube channel. All of these initiatives are great and if they help students and promote the university I applaud them. I just think any use or way that students have to connect to each other or the university is great as long as it is for in the best interests of all participants. We have a lot of technology that can be used bring a sense of community to distance learning and community is an important part of learning.

**What do you think AU needs to do to improve itself for the future?**

I think we've been through some tough times in the past couple years, and I think that's affected people quite a bit. I maintain that there are a lot of great people that are doing a lot great things, and that hasn't changed, so I think we need to continue to support those people and ideas, and continually keep moving forward and trying new things.

There are so many initiatives that continually go on in the university. In FST, specifically, there is excellent research and teaching in the Centre for Science, and our colleagues from the School of Computing and the RAIC Centre for Architecture do amazing things. But the one thing lacking from AU is communication. Many of us are separated by distance as well and this can create a communication gap between different departments. There are so many ways we've tried to connect people, but we're all so busy with our regular jobs it can be hard to remember to get in touch with those other people who you aren't immediately dealing with. This can sometimes create a lag in projects we would like to undertake. However, in spite of this, I am still impressed by the things done by AU staff and students. I think if people can continue to communicate, connect, and move forward on things it can only be good.

And in science we continue to have increases in enrollment every year, so we must be doing something right. We don't have many concerns with the quality of courses and the student experience, but anything we can do to continue to improve and innovate is certainly something that we are interested in.

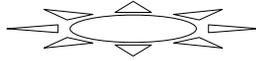
Also, programs are a big issue for the Centre for Science and FST and we're moving ahead with new programs, but there's been limited funding, especially in the current environment in Alberta. Still, our Masters of Science in Environmental Science has just gone to government. We've got a lot of cool people involved in that program from the Athabasca River Basin Research Institute (ARBRI). Funding is a major issue in the development of new programs and in research and so we have been very strategic in our planning. We look forward to continued program offerings and research expansion in FST.

Another issue is AU does not have any graduate programs in Science yet. In computing, yes, but not pure science—and that makes it difficult to get government grants for research. There's a lot of good research going on here already, but with a graduate program that would be even better, which is part of why this MSc Environmental Science degree is so important. It will also give our students more options, and we already have students interested in it. We also have a Bachelor of Science in Applied Math in the approval process. AU will be the only online program in applied mathematics and it's received some excellent comments from external reviewers.

We have to prioritize and be conservative in what we work on, but were' always looking at new programs and opportunities for students.

**Is there anything else you wanted to add?**

Just that in a lot of the initiatives that are started, the students are kept in mind, and we do want to know what the students think. The biggest concern is that with any of these new initiatives communication is key and I am glad to have had the opportunity to share what I know with you.


**In Conversation**  
**With Don Rosenthal, Part I**
**Wanda Waterman**

**All You Need is Love—and Openhearted Listening**

"The mind's habit of closing the heart is tenacious, and the ego will persist in its ancient ways. You will doubtless stumble on the path many times. Nonetheless, change eventually begins ..."

- Don Rosenthal in *Learning to Love*

"The truth is, although the mind will say it's not safe to love, there's never a good reason to keep the heart closed."

- Martha Rosenthal in *Learning to Love*

Psychotherapist Don Rosenthal and his wife Martha, a mind/body/spirit healing practitioner, are the authors of a number of books for couples, including *Learning to Love*, a marriage manual that leaves all others in the dust. What's radically different about their approach is the premise that couplehood is both a spiritual journey and an unparalleled opportunity for personal growth. They teach effective means of self-examination and communication to resolve problems that could lead to breakup.

Don and Martha counsel couples in private practice and conduct weekend retreats in which they encourage couples to explore the roots of any personal pain that might be creating conflict in their relationships. They also teach partners how to be mindfully present to each other even when the partner's message is hard to hear.

Recently Don Rosenthal took the time to answer Wanda Waterman's questions about the origins and foundations of their remarkable life's work.

**Why a Career in Psychology?**

"In my ten years in Alaska I realized that I had placed great limits on the possibilities of consciousness. Living in isolation and simplicity for some time, I explored the mind and found it fascinating. I learned some things about the workings of mind. I discovered that I had a natural aptitude and interest in helping others see within more clearly, although I couldn't picture myself within a traditional setting and methodology.

---

"One day in my late forties I realized I could do it my way, with a spiritual component and more emphasis on the fruits of mindfulness and on what I can do now rather than on how I got here. I went to graduate school in psychotherapy and got an MA."

### **Why Couples Therapy?**

There is a special quality to the work when I see people's lives being directly demonstrated before me in the way they relate, as opposed to hearing their lives described. Also, there is in my view a notable lack of spiritual wisdom for those who want to be equal partners on the spiritual journey.

"The traditional religious views are filled with exhortations to be more loving, kind, and forgiving, and this can seem shallow to those caught in the grip of strong negativity. There's room for much new creativity in spiritual psychology. This being said, I also do a fair amount of work individually."

### **The School of Personal Demons and the World Beyond Them**

"My greatest educational experiences were confronting my demons in my own marriage and observing myself, to my surprise, loving unconditionally as a father. Both had a profound effect on my sense of who I am and what is possible. In terms of outside influences, Krishnamurti played an important role in first pointing to something beyond, as well as Nisargedatta. *A Course in Miracles* and Emmanuel opened up the heart component for me without sacrificing clarity."

### **A Sharing of Deep Purpose**

"I see a successful marriage as a union in which two people share a deep purpose in being together and are committed to being allies on their journey, a union wherein they're able to celebrate the enjoyable moments, investigate the difficult ones, and learn what's needed to release the obstacles to love. I believe they're successful when they keep learning and ripening together."

### **What is Openhearted Listening and Why Does it Work So Well?**

"Martha and I wanted to learn together to develop communication skills by which we could both count on being emotionally understood about even the most difficult issues. I wanted us to be able to put ourselves emotionally in the other's place, applying these tools when it's most difficult rather than getting defensive.

"Openhearted listening is a commitment to responding without defensiveness when your partner tells you about something you did that didn't work for him or her. You empathise and show that his or her feeling about what happened makes sense to you under the circumstances. This is called *validation*.

"This I can do even if I disagree with my partner's story about what happened, or her interpretation. In order to validate I put my own feelings and interpretations completely on the back burner."

*(To be continued)*

Feel free to contact Don Rosenthal at [couples@sover.net](mailto:couples@sover.net).

**DID YOU KNOW?****Convocation Nears**

Convocation is rapidly approaching, and, like in past years, AUSU is providing bus service from Edmonton for those graduating students who are having difficulties finding their own transportation from Edmonton up to Athabasca University.

AUSU also has arranged discounts with hotels both in Edmonton and in Athabasca for those students who are interested in attending their convocation in person. However, students who are interested should contact AUSU at [ausu@ausu.org](mailto:ausu@ausu.org) as soon as possible. Seats and rooms are going quickly.

**INTERNATIONAL NEWS DESK****At Home and Abroad****At Home:****Second round of First Nations Education Bill deemed Third Rate**

Bill C-33, the controversial bill which would create the First Nations control of First Nations Education Act has been rejected by First Nations (FN) Chiefs, and they have demanded that the government immediately withdraw it according to CBC.

Aboriginal Affairs Minister Bernard Valcourt has said that the bill meets the five conditions outlined by the Assembly of First Nations (AFN). However, various FN chiefs have stated that one of the primary concerns was that the act be co-developed with the FN in conjunction with the government of Canada, something they allege has not happened at all.

Aboriginal Affairs Canada has responded by saying that they will not invest any new money into aboriginal education so long as real educational reforms have not been undertaken, and no reforms will be undertaken until the AFN agrees on new

legislation.

**Around the Globe: Wouldn't you love to burn your student loans?**

In Chile, they did. An artist, Francisco Tapia, more commonly known as "Papas Fritas" (Fried Potatoes) snuck into a vault at a private, for-profit university, the Universidad del Mar, and stole tuition contracts. He then burned these documents which he claimed represented some \$500 million in debt, according to *The Guardian*. Unlike in Canada, students are deeply involved in politics, with monthly marches and four former student leaders elected to parliament. This has forced the government to institute a massive set of reforms, including ending state subsidies to for-profit universities and schools like the one Papas Fritas stole the documents from. The ashes have now been put in a mobile art exhibit with a video screen that plays the artist's message about "It's over. You are all free from debt. You don't have to pay a penny."

Government investigators had already shut down the university as being little more than a money laundering operation, but students were still tied to their tuition contracts. Lawyers say that while the destruction of the documents does not technically eliminate the debt, it does make it virtually impossible to prove that any debt is owed, rendering it effectively uncollectible.



## Both Scary and Sad

Who needs a travel alarm clock when she has a smart phone? Who needs a Rolodex, quaint little purse-sized address book, or the five-pound Yellow Pages when everyone who's anyone can be Googled? Who needs two-way radios when everyone and his brother have a cell phone?

These are just some of the thoughts rattling around my head as I look to simplify my life. Bulletin: I'm no early adopter of virtually anything. I'm not a twenty-something. I do love stuff. I hang onto things because they cost good money and someday I may need/use it again. Or so I hope.

And yet I find myself thinking more and more like my minimalist son; who gets rid of stuff often, quickly, dispassionately, and with zero sentimentality.

And yet. There are relapses in my behavior. My Cobra two-way radios got nary a sniff at our recent garage sale, which, incidentally, we're 'holding over' until the town-wide one in early June. I'm planning to pull that piece of merchandise from the table and use them as top quality walkie-talkies when Grady comes to the farm. Guaranteed they'll work better than the toy Mater and Lightning McQueen ones I picked up at someone else's g-sale. What techno-savvy little boy wouldn't want to try those out in the back forty?

You'd think that in this part of rural Alberta, with an aging population, there would still be people who use a land line telephone and want the convenience of several cordless ones to scatter (and lose) around the house. No takers.

Or what about the oh, so lovely cassette tape recorder? Three ring zippered Mead binders? Carving board with scary metal prongs to keep that Christmas turkey from slip- sliding away? B-rate DVD movies? Five piece tapestry Oscar de la Renta luggage set including garment bag?

Let me guess: If you want to tape something you get both sound and visuals if you use your phone? Kids don't use lined refill sheets anymore because everything is digital? Turkey, what turkey—we're planning to be in Mexico, or Phoenix, or parts unknown? Okay, I never should have bought those lousy movies in the first place; even big name stars make stinkers sometimes. We're all getting too old, weak, and in a hurry to *carry* luggage. No wheels? No way. And, besides, what would the conveyor belts and Air Canada baggage tossers do to the lovely fabric? We need indestructible space age stuff these days.

That's also why my sister put her 1980s era World Book Encyclopedia Yearbooks into the free box. I haven't checked but I'd bet my last dollar they're still there. Unlike the army of people who used to go door-to-door (!) selling the twenty-five volume sets to families who wanted to ensure their kids would grow up smart.

Some days it's both a bit scary and sad how things have changed. Other days we try to parlay the nostalgic into cold hard cash, from where I sit.

*Hazel Anaka's first novel is Lucky Dog. Visit her [website](#) for more information or follow her on Twitter @anakawrites.*



### Dear Barb:

*I have been dating this amazing guy for about four months. We get along really well and rarely argue. We have a lot in common and I could see having a life with him, except for one thing, his two-year-old daughter! She lives with her mother, but spends every other weekend with Brian. During the weekends when Alicia is with Brian I hardly see him at all. He doesn't seem to want to include me in his activities with his daughter. The few times I have met Alicia, she seems really spoiled and wants to be the center of attention. I don't think this is right, I should be included in their activities. Am I way out of line?*

*What do you think?*

*Thanks Sara*

Hi Sara:

It's pretty typical for a two year old to want to be the center of attention, especially if she only sees her dad every other weekend. I think you need to back off and let your boyfriend decide when and how much involvement you will have in his daughter's life. The relationship is fairly new and perhaps he doesn't want his daughter to get attached until he is sure this relationship is going to last. So I would say just let your boyfriend and his daughter have their

weekends together, if and when the time is right, you will be included in these weekends.

### Dear Barb:

*I am in my fourth year of university and have been struggling to pay for my education. I work part time as a waitress in a local pub, plus part time in a bakery and I still have a hard time making ends meet. All my free time is spent studying, so I really don't have a life. I've been reading the recent articles in The Voice "Tricks for Tuition" and the subsequent editorial comments. I had no idea there was such a demand for this type of work. I am seriously considering doing this for a while, it would certainly make my life easier. It can't be all that bad if 100,000 students have registered. What do you think?*

*Misty*

Dear Misty:

There are a lot of risks to this type of work, as stated in the articles. I really don't think this is the type of work you can casually enter. You have to ask yourself if you are willing to compromise your morals and values without impacting your self-worth as a person. For some people this isn't an issue. Is this a job you can share with people in your life, or would it be something you would keep secret? What about a future employer discovering that you were a sex worker? With social media this may be difficult to hide. I would suggest you continue with your current situation, as you have managed to get through four years of University, no doubt it has been difficult. Ultimately, it is your decision, but this is not something you should rush into. Good Luck Misty.

*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.*

Comic

Wanda Waterman

# Weird Canada

**DANGEROUS CANADIAN CONTRABAND  
MAY LEAD TO WEIGHT GAIN,  
DIABETES, AND TOOTH DECAY**

BECAUSE THE PROVINCE OF QUEBEC PRODUCES MOST OF THE WORLD'S MAPLE SYRUP, IT CONTROLS THE MARKET, STOCKPILING EXTRA MAPLE SYRUP IN ORDER TO KEEP PRICES HIGH. THE EXTRA SYRUP IS KEPT IN WAREHOUSES AS PART OF THE GLOBAL STRATEGIC MAPLE SYRUP RESERVE.

IN 2012 A WAREHOUSE ROBBERY RESULTED IN THE LOSS OF 18 MILLION DOLLARS WORTH OF MAPLE SYRUP WHICH QUICKLY ENTERED THE AMERICAN MARKET. CANADIAN AND AMERICAN POLICE ARE STILL TRYING TO RECOVER THE STOLEN SYRUP.



**WAIT! I SMELL  
CONTRABAND!  
AND BACON!  
AND FRENCH  
TOAST!**

WANDA WATERMAN



## Changes to AU Course Materials

In the fall of 2013 AU began the process of replacing hard-copy textbooks for all undergraduate courses with e-text versions. Implementation has been staged in phases with about two dozen courses being transitioned each month. AUSU is supportive of the provision of electronic materials for students who want them, but has consistently lobbied AU to provide students with a choice of materials format to accommodate the diverse needs of our membership.

Over the last six months many AUSU members have been vocal in their opposition to e-texts as the only, mandatory option for all courses. AU has listened, and is considering several options to provide students with the choices they want. One option might include removing textbooks as a mandatory purchase with course enrolment, and allowing students to purchase their own books.

AUSU needed to know more about student perspectives on the options that have been proposed and held a survey to find out more. The results will be shared with members in an upcoming newsletter.

## A New Era at AU - A New AU president

After two terms in the Office of President, Dr. Frits Pannekoek is retiring. Last week, in recognition of his contributions to distance education, the University of South Africa (Unisa) granted him an honorary Doctor of Literature and Philosophy award. AUSU congratulates Dr. Pannekoek on this great honour, and the recognition it brings to AU as a world leader in distance and open learning. We wish him all the best over his final weeks in the role of president, and in all his future endeavours!

We had hoped by now to be able to announce the selection of the presidential search committee for a new, full-term president; however, as a suitable candidate has not yet been found, AU has instead appointed an interim president: Dr. Peter MacKinnon, formerly of the University of Saskatchewan. Dr. MacKinnon has also served as chair of the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada (AUCC) and on the Science, Technology and Innovation Council of Canada. We look forward to working with him over the coming year!



## Convocation travel information

AUSU wants to make sure this year's graduating class has a fantastic convocation. To make this happen, we're providing free transportation via bus or limo service to take people from Edmonton to the Athabasca Multiplex each day of convocation 2014. This applies to those graduating from AU undergraduate programs, and their guests (some limits may apply).

We've also arranged hotel discounts in Edmonton.

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Plus, if you stay at the Edmonton hotel where our discounts apply, the shuttle will pick you up right out front, and drop you off at your hotel after the ceremonies.

This service is provided exclusively by AUSU, but grads in some faculties may already be eligible for free transportation. Check your program website or the dean's office to find out.

For more information, contact [ausu@ausu.org](mailto:ausu@ausu.org) as soon as possible. We'll also send you a tip sheet with more information about travelling to Edmonton, getting to and from the airport, etc.

*This column is provided by AUSU to facilitate communication with its members. The Voice does not write or edit this section; all content has been exclusively and directly provided by AUSU, and any questions or comments about the material should be directed to [ausu@ausu.org](mailto:ausu@ausu.org).*

# 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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