



Vol 23 Issue 15 2015-04-10

STOP THE PRESS?

Is AUSU Council Ending *The Voice Magazine*?

Minds We Meet

Interviews with Students Like You

Time Crunch

Stop Scheduling in your Head

Plus:

*The Travelling Student
Is Independence Important?
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, and please indicate if we may publish your letter.

EDITORIAL**Karl Low****The Importance of Independence**

There's a lot of good stuff in this issue, such as Philip Kirkbride's Travelling Student, which this week includes a link to a video of his moped trip in Hawaii, and our latest interview with student and former AUSU Councillor, Evan Schmidt. But I'm finding it hard to concentrate on them because they may be some of the last articles we ever see in *The Voice Magazine*.

You read that correctly. *The Voice Magazine* has been publishing since almost the inception of AUSU. It was one of the very first things that students funded, and has grown from a small, eight page publication mailed out at great cost to the students two or three times a year, to the current 22-30 pages of AU student-focussed content that comes out almost every single week for just under \$0.40/credit. And it may not be around for much longer.

Barb Lehtiniemi goes into detail with her Feature Article "Stop the Press?", but the short version is that AUSU Council announced their AGM, and one of the motions they want to bring forward threatens the independence, possibly the very existence, of *The Voice Magazine*. I say "possibly" because, as yet, nobody on AUSU Council has responded to my requests for the wording of this motion, which may change both The Voice's guarantee of independence, and its guarantee of funding from AUSU. These are guarantees that the students before thought was important enough to put into the bylaws, so that no individual Council could ever get rid of it without going through the students membership.

These guarantees are what allow me to pay students like you who write for The Voice Magazine, and spend my time editing their work and helping them become better writers. They're what allow me to connect to other students throughout the AUSU membership, and bring you their stories in the Minds We Meet column, or get more in-depth with the tutors and professors who teach us in every installment of Meeting The minds, and let me turn you on to unusual movies and music through our music reviews and columns like The Mindful Bard and Gregor's Bed. (Seriously, if you haven't seen *Nebraska* yet you're missing out. It's on Netflix now.)

Most importantly, however, these guarantees are what allow me to print reports on things like when this AUSU Council decided to extend its vacation time by a third, or decided that lobbying for more student funding for needy students was "unrealistic" and not something it wanted to be doing. This independent voice is, in my opinion, not only essential to make sure not only that you, as students, are aware of what is doing in your name but that, more importantly, that Council knows you'll be made aware.

More personally, it's a job I love and definitely want to continue. Getting to know students as writers, or through the interviews, helping them with their writing, and yes, paying students for their work, are all things I find fulfilling and don't want to leave behind.

And it may all be under threat.

But that doesn't mean all is lost, however. If you think it's important to keep an independent Voice around, you can help. Write AUSU at ausu@ausu.org and ask to attend the AGM. It's on Tuesday, April 21st at 5:30 pm, and you can attend through your phone on the toll-free number, or through the internet if you have a microphone and speakers attached to your computer. If you're an undergraduate student you have a right to attend, to make your voice heard, and to vote on any motions put forward during the meeting.

You can also help by telling your friends and classmates through the various forums on AU or Facebook pages where you know AU students will see your message. Even if they don't regularly read The Voice Magazine themselves, they may feel it's important there be some independent reporting of what AUSU Council is doing for the money you give.

Another thing you can do to help is to take this survey so that we can get some idea of the number of people who think it's important that we keep an independent Voice running and publishing, and spread that link around as well.

It's your student union, it's your student union fees, and it's your bylaws that are being changed here. You have a right to have your say about how it is done and what is done with them.

Unfortunately, without knowing the text of the motion, we have no way of knowing what AUSU Council is planning to do with your fees, or with the Voice. All we know is that it will be replacing what currently keeps *The Voice Magazine* funded and independent. Replacing it with what it calls a Writer In Residence, something that doesn't sound like it will maintain any independence in its reporting.

I'm hoping that you, like me, think that an independent Voice is an important part of your student experience. That, whether you read it or not, having it there serves your needs by helping to safeguard the funds you entrust to the Students' Union. And I'm hoping that you'll think it's important enough to take action.

Fill out the survey. Attend the AGM.

And until the 21st, enjoy the read.

Who knows, it may be one of the last times you get to.

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

MINDS WE MEET



Evan Schmidt is an AU student living in Vaudreuil, Quebec, which is west of Montreal. Evan began taking AU courses at age 14. He is currently in the Management Applications certificate program, and will soon be working on a 4-year Bachelor of Management degree, with a marketing major.

Evan was recently interviewed by The Voice Magazine about school, military life, and the value of a positive attitude.

Describe the path that led you to AU.

My mother discovered AU originally. She encouraged me to apply for early admission to AU at age 14. I was being home-schooled because I was terribly bored at regular school. With home-schooling, we were able to develop our own rhythm. Initially, I took university courses on the side while still taking high-school-level courses. Now, I'm studying with AU full-time. Starting at AU so young was an interesting experience. My first course was BIOL 204, *Principles of Biology I*. It was a hard course to take at that age—it was such a different learning environment. While I did well in that course, I've since

found business courses more to my liking.

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

I enjoy playing music. I play a few instruments; one is the euphonium, which is a baritone-voiced brass instrument. I'm involved with both the air and sea cadets as a band instructor. And I also serve with the military in the reserves.

What happens after you finish your education?

After I'm done, I'm looking at going into the military full-time. This spring, I have a 3-month training course in BC with the reserves. That should give me an idea of how well I'll enjoy military life.

Who in your life had the greatest influence on your desire to learn?

My mom! In addition to me, I have two younger sisters and one younger brother who are home-schooled. We have a computer room set up where we all have our own desks. I'm still living at home, so my Mom still likes to keep tabs on my schooling. Although it's not really necessary, it's kind of inevitable.

What famous person, past or present, would you like to have lunch with, and why?

I think it would be Oscar Peterson, who was a famous pianist from the Montreal area. He's seen a few things, like how much music has evolved since he first started out. I think he'd be an interesting person with a unique perspective.

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

When I started out, most of my AU courses weren't online. However, most of them are now and I quite enjoy it. And with the business courses we have the call centre, which works well. I find I get answers to questions quite quickly, although one time I had a bit of difficulty in getting to speak to a tutor. I've taken a few courses through the military, which is still developing its online courses. I find AU courses much more user-friendly.

Was there ever a point when you wavered about your education?

There was a period when I was unsure about continuing on. I was 17 or 18 and was almost finished my BGS degree. I was eager to get into the work force, but ultimately I decided to continue with AU and get a second degree.

What's your most memorable AU course so far, and why?

It was WGST 333, *Goddess Mythology, Women's Spirituality, and Ecofeminism*. It was a very different course from others I'd studied. It really changed my views on gender structure in society. It opened my mind to how society works in general with its current matriarchal/patriarchal construct. I had an excellent tutor, as well.

Describe the proudest moment of your life.

It was when I got my private pilot's licence. I got a scholarship through the air cadets, and obtained my licence when I was 17.

What have you given up to go to AU that you regret the most? Was it worth it?

I don't think I had to give up much, even though I've been taking AU courses for 10 years. I think I was really lucky. The only loss is perhaps the opportunity costs, because I'm in school instead of the workforce. But I expect when I'm finished my education my earning power will provide some pay-back for the time spent.

You served a term on AUSU's student council.**How was that experience?**

It was a wonderful experience. I enjoyed getting more involved in student affairs. I enjoyed my time on student council; we had wonderful people and a really supportive team that worked well together. I really enjoyed the experience.

If you were the new president of AU, what would be your first project?

There'd be a lot, but what I would end up looking into is course transferability. AU has a lot of experience with online studies whereas other universities are just starting out with online. I think AU could team up with other universities so that there would be a streamlined process when students took an online course at one university. There should be an automatic process in place that online courses would be recognized without going through the transfer process.

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If you were trapped on an island, what 3 things would you bring?

For starters, I'd want a knife; it would be useful for just about everything. This would be a Swiss Army type knife, with all the gadgets. Next I'd want some sort of container for collecting water. And finally, a solar-powered tablet computer. Presumably it would be loaded with all sorts of information—including survival tips, hopefully—so that I wouldn't get bored.

Describe one thing that distinguishes you from most other people.

It would be my generally positive attitude. I'm always smiling and happy. I'm a laid-back person and I think my good attitude makes life more bearable.

What is the most valuable lesson you have learned in life?

"Anything is within reach, you just have to have the guts to reach for it."

What do you think about e-texts?

E-texts are not something I particularly enjoy. While e-texts are great for searching for a particular term, I prefer a physical text. Any courses I've had that only offered e-texts I've ended up buying a physical textbook. I just can't stand reading online.

How do you find communications with your course tutors?

Overall, very satisfying. There have been a few that take longer to respond, but overall they've been very good—more good than not.

Where has life taken you so far?

When I was younger I travelled to Mexico; I have an uncle who lives there. I've also been to Florida. I've been to Alberta to do training for the reserves, and I'll soon be in BC for the same reason. I'm looking forward to visiting the west coast. I've been to the east coast: PEI, New Brunswick, Boston, New York. Those places are easily accessible from where I live in Quebec. And I spent two weeks in Paris once. It was interesting to compare the French spoken there to the French spoken in Quebec.

What (non-AU) book are you reading now?

I'm reading the *Ice and Fire* series of The Game of Thrones, by George R. R. Martin. It's interesting to compare the books with the television series. I've already watched the series, now I'm reading the books to fill in the details.

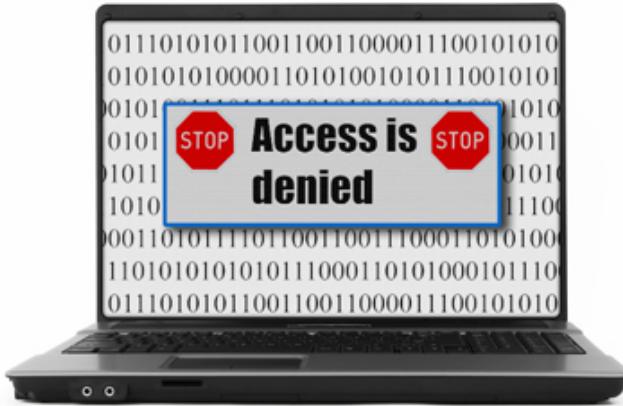
DID YOU KNOW?**YOU CAN HELP SAVE THE VOICE!**

If you're currently taking an under-graduate course from AU and you're not in a graduate program, you can attend, speak, and vote on the [motions](#) at AUSU's AGM on April 21st, 2015 at 5:30 pm.

The meeting is held by teleconference on a toll free number, or through your computer headset and microphone. Contact ausu@ausu.org to register yourself to attend the meeting. If you want to make sure The Voice Magazine keeps publishing and stays independent, you need to make that heard at the AGM!

Stop the Press? Does AUSU Council Want to Kill The Voice?

Barbara Lehtiniemi



In a puzzling move last week, AUSU Student Council announced it would seek to replace *The Voice Magazine* with a "Writer in Residence."

Without notice and with minimal fanfare, AUSU placed an upcoming event listing on its website, and on the AUSU Update page in April 3rd's *The Voice*, for the seemingly hastily-organized 2015 Annual General Meeting. The meeting notice link reveals an agenda that contains a heretofore unheard of Special Resolution to "replace Section 7.5 with Writer in Residence".

No further information is provided. Unless you know that "Section 7.5" refers to AUSU's bylaws, and that particular bylaw section—actually called Article 7.5—refers to *The Voice Magazine*, you'd be in the dark.

Is AUSU torpedoing *The Voice Magazine*? I'm still waiting to see if more information is forthcoming from AUSU Council. If the student members of AUSU are expected to cast a thoughtful, informed vote on this proposed Special Resolution at the Annual General Meeting April 21, they will certainly need more information.

Here's what I know now, with the information that is available. In the meeting notice posted on the AUSU website for the April 21, 2015 Annual General Meeting, agenda item 5.0 reads:

Special Resolution Motion to replace Section 7.5 with Writer In Residence.

In the AUSU bylaws, Article 7.5 currently reads as follows:

7.5 The Voice Magazine

7.5.1 The Voice shall be allocated 12.5% of AUSU student fees for each fiscal year as the operating budget.

7.5.2 The Voice shall manage its own affairs with the monies provided by AUSU.

7.5.3 The Voice will operate an autonomous publication without interference from AUSU regarding content.

The Voice Magazine, according to AUSU Policy 7.3, has a mandate and mission statement as follows:

Mandate

The Voice is an online publication used for communicating with the members of Athabasca University Students' Union. The Voice will endeavor to provide current, factual, pertinent information and entertainment in a clear and understandable format, and also to provide a forum where students may

gain experience with having their writing published. The Voice will maintain an open submissions policy and actively encourage student participation.

Mission Statement

- a) The Voice will focus on issues and topics of importance or interest to AU students
- b) The Voice will represent the students' point of view.

I've been reading *The Voice Magazine* regularly since I became an AU student in 2012. I find *The Voice* to be the single-best source of information for news about Athabasca University. While AU does a decent job of getting good news out to its students via its website and direct e-mails, it's AUSU that makes sure I learn all the not-so-good news about AU that students also have a right to know. And AUSU does that primarily via *The Voice Magazine*.

The Voice, in its turn, publishes news about AUSU, including the good, the bad, and—heaven forbid—the ugly. Because AUSU is funded solely through student fees, students have a right to know what goes on at AUSU. We, the students, provide the oversight to AUSU Council. We, the students, vote in members to represent us on council. We, the students, are the ones to whom AUSU Council is accountable.

Having an independent press like *The Voice* encourages, if not ensures, that AUSU council perform their duties in a forthright manner. Having an independent press gives students news—the good and the bad—about AU and AUSU, as well as perspective, entertainment, culture, and those ever-helpful study tips. *The Voice* also gives student writers a chance to get published while honing their composition skills.

Is a Writer in Residence going to serve students' interests with the same breadth and comprehensiveness that *The Voice* does? AUSU Council, you have 11 days in which to attempt to convince us, the students.

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



In Conversation ..with the Winter Brave, Part II



Wanda Waterman

Moving Past Emotion

"Music definitely fuels my muse foremost. It's what occupies my brain most hours of the day. I'm constantly searching for new music and seeing what unique quality each new artist brings."

- Jake Scarpino of The Winter Brave

The Winter Brave is an alternative rock duo based in Portsmouth, New Hampshire. The world sat up and took notice in 2013 when Dave Grohl of the Foo

Fighters dropped their name during an "Ask Me Anything" on Reddit.com.

The new single, "As You Once Were," from their soon-to-be-released EP, *The Hand You Never Seem to Lend*, is a spirited rock anthem with deliciously retro elements.

Recently duo members Sam and Jake took the time to answer Wanda Waterman's questions about the new EP, the current direction of alternative music, and what it takes to keep on making great sounds.

Your new EP—*The Hand you Never Seem to Lend*—seems to carry a rather bitter theme of rejection and abandonment. Is there a story behind that?

Jake: Songwriting in general is a very cathartic experience for me. Writing lyrics especially helps in moving past emotions or personal problems. Because the lyrics usually come from the peak of those experiences, a lot of songs are kind of depressing and bitter, which is a bit unfortunate.

How did you come up with "The Winter Brave?"

Back when we were 15 we took our old band name and put it through Google Translate a few times until we landed on "The Winter Brave."

In your opinion, what is the state of alternative independent music now, and what is your peculiar contribution?

The genre of "alternative" is in sort of weird spot right now. The general trend in music nowadays is shifting away from guitars and more to electronic sounds. I think that trend is also apparent in the alternative scene.

We like to think that our music still has an alternative feel to it, but closer to what would have been commonplace five to seven years ago. There are still bands like The Black Keys, Cage the Elephant, Band of Skulls, and recently Royal Blood, which sound something like us, and who are still considered alternative.

What conditions do you require in your life in order to go on being creative?

That's a little ironic considering the collaborative nature of our writing process is that most songs start when one of us is alone writing. Something that's really important in both of our creative processes is solitude. Being the least bit self-conscious while trying to create can really hinder the product. So while we do collaborate all the time, ideas need to begin from being alone.

What do you feed your muse? Are there any books, films, or albums that have deeply influenced your development as an artist?

Sam: Music definitely fuels my muse foremost. It's what occupies my brain most hours of the day. I'm constantly searching for new music and seeing what unique quality each new artist brings.

Probably the most influential album of my songwriting-formative years was Grizzly Bear's *Veckatimest*. I could not shake that album for a long time. They were trying things I hadn't thought of and playing their instruments in ways I'd never considered. I can definitely hear parts of that album in almost every song I'd written after I heard it.

If you had an artistic mission statement, what would it be?

Rock as loud as possible.

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.

The Travelling Student

Taken for a Ride



Philip Kirkbride

My name is Philip Kirkbride. I'm a college graduate from Ontario studying at AU. I've always wanted to do an exchange program or study abroad but never found the right time to do so. This is the story of how Athabasca University has allowed me to create my own study abroad program. In the last issue Matt and I rented mopeds to get around the island.

I used to own a motorcycle in high school, so I felt right at home on the rental moped. Matt took a few minutes to get used to it but after that we were speeding along Waikiki Beach. It seems like everyone in Waikiki was having a good time, I couldn't help but grin as I passed Matt, taking the lead.

Only minutes from Waikiki beach we passed Diamond Head, a state park inside a volcanic tuff cone formation. Still having too much fun on the bikes we passed by and drove along the beach. It didn't take long to get out of the city. Soon we were driving beach on one side, grassy mountains, palm trees, and wide open fields of grass on the other. Using a GoPro I managed to get some footage of the ride.

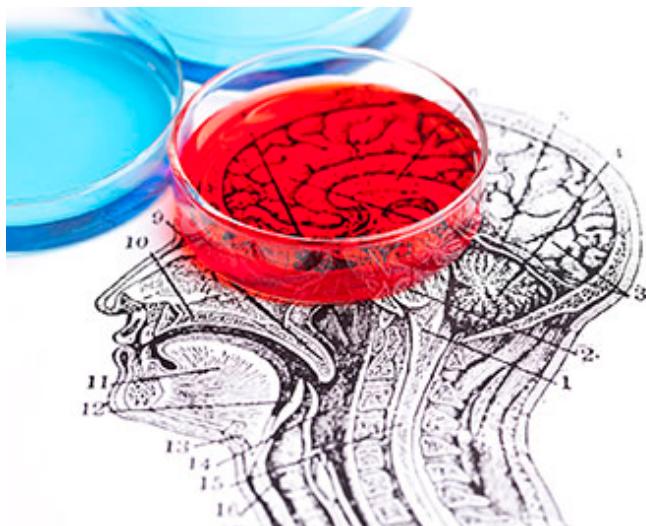
After an hour or so of driving around we stopped at Waimanalo Beach. Compared to Waikiki beach Waimanalo was empty. Running into the water, I wasn't expecting to be knocked off my feet but the first wave hit me so hard that I did a full flip underwater. Apparently the waves are always pretty strong, which is great for surfing.

We continued from Waimanalo Beach to Maunawili Falls where we were told that part of the show Lost was filmed. It didn't take us long to figure out why they chose the location. Within minutes we met people walking back to the entrance telling us that further up a sign says you've gone too far. According to the sign we had to go back 500 meters and turn right, but we didn't remember passing any paths. Walking back we ran into a couple to whom we explained the sign, they, like us, ignored the warning and wanted to see it for themselves.

It seemed a lot of people had given up on ever finding the falls and just turned back and left. We considered doing the same but spotted a lightly tread path leading up a steep hill. We still weren't sure it was the right path until we saw someone heading back who confirmed. As we went a bit further in we started seeing discarded shoes and clothing that was completely covered in mud.

Getting to the falls requires an hour long trek through small rivers and paths where you're up to your knees in mud. That's assuming you don't get lost. After trying to race Matt I ended up going off the path and getting lost. I only met up with Matt again once I'd finally made it to the falls. By the time we made it I had lost my shirt and sandals to the mud. Maunawili Falls is definitely not a trek for the faint at heart. So, exhausted, we drove back to the hostel.

Primal Numbers The Cramming Game



S.D. Livingston

If you're a student, procrastination is probably as much a part of your day as textbooks and quizzes. Your laptop's ready, your books are open, but there always seems to be something more important to do. Call a friend, grab some lunch, maybe even help your kids with their homework. Besides, you can always squeeze in some last-minute studying. You'll brew some coffee, pull an all-nighter, and pass with flying colours. Except for one little problem. Science has proven that cramming just doesn't work.

If cramming is how you usually study, you might think those researchers got it all wrong. After all,

the fresher something is in your memory the more likely you are to remember it, right? And if you've just spent the last few hours poring over the names of Roman emperors or topics in vector calculus, it will all be floating around up there at the top of your head when you sit down to write your exam.

It sounds good in theory but the reality is that our brains just don't work that way. As this BBC article [explains](#), there's a big difference between recognizing something and being able to remember it. Suppose, for example, that you spend a few hours studying a chapter in your textbook. Your visual cortex is processing images and words just fine. You close the book and go to bed, the details fresh in your head.

But then, the next day, you need to remember what you were reading and recall it for an exam. And that means calling on different parts of your brain than you used for studying. The trouble is, they probably won't be able to find it. That's because cramming a subject for one or two study sessions doesn't mean you've created a memory of it. All you've done is run it past your visual processors, and that's not enough to make it stick.

In fact, a long, intense study session could work against building long-term memory. As this article over at the *Association for Psychological Science* [explains](#), researchers used different study methods to test how long and how well students remembered new vocabulary words. The result? Students who did two or more study sessions with a long break between them performed the best. Cramming, on the other hand, "reduces long-term retention."

Still, even if science has proven that cramming doesn't work, it's not always an easy habit to break. There are all the usual distractions, like a new season of *Game of Thrones*. And going back to school as an adult can mean plenty of unavoidable delays in hitting the books—things like kids getting sick or meetings that run late. Before you know it, that resolution to stick to your study schedule gets sidetracked through no fault of your own.

So what if you've got tons of studying to do and not much time to do it in? Well, science might still be able to help.

Several recent studies have found that physically picking up a pen and writing your notes down on paper has a much better impact on memory than typing the same notes on a computer. It might seem counterproductive

to take the slow route when you don't have much time to study, but slowing down is the whole point. It forces you to focus more deeply on what you're reading. If you're typing notes into a computer, it's much easier to let your mind skim over the words as your fingers fly over the keyboard.

And writing notes by hand means you're more likely to condense the lesson and put it into your own words—a proven help when it comes to committing those notes to your long-term memory.

It's not the perfect solution to cramming. But it might just keep you from looking like Mr. Bean at exam time.

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.



Study Tips from a Semi-Anonymous Friend

There is nothing more that The Study Dude wants for you than to hurriedly suck up to your professor for a coveted research assistantship—one of your own making.

Well, in these articles, as The Study Dude, I'll try to give you the study tips you need to help make your learning easier. I'll also give you straight and honest opinions and personal anecdotes—even the embarrassing ones that you wouldn't ever dare read about from any other study tip guru.

This week's focus is on light, friendly read titled [How To Write A Lot](#) by Paul J. Silvia, Ph.D.

Excuses Be Gone! Ridding of the Reasons Not to Write

Not to undermine the philosophy presented by Dr. Silvia, but I read another book that slated writing for five-minute stints is a goldmine practice. Yes, hovering over the desk for a five minute writing stint bleeds into a ten-minute writing stint which inevitably gushes into a four hour festive first draft. Well, I might be overstating the reality slightly, but you get the picture.

Writing well comes from discipline, to which Paul Silvia is no stranger. Here is a basket of tips on how to write lots from Dr. Silvia:

- Make a schedule--and stick to it. Treat your writing time as if it were a teaching session—a commitment with no room for renegeing.
- Start your writing commitment to four hours a week, choosing whichever time of the day suits most floats your boat.
- People who express an inability to commit to a schedule should consider all of the activities they attend to daily without fail, such as watching a favourite television program or going to sleep at a set time. No excuses exist for not sticking to your schedule.
- Disable internet and isolate yourself for the full scheduled writing stint.

- Don't let others dissuade you from your writing objective at your schedule time.
- Write during unscheduled times as well. The more writing time you invest, the merrier.
- If you need to read additional articles or attend to other matters pertinent to your writing success, do so during the scheduled writing time.
- It doesn't matter how rickety your office environment seems, any kind of office space, including a washroom, pose as rooms ripe for writing.
- Waiting to be inspired to write is a futile strategy. Consider how far that strategy has taken you so far. The inspiration strategy takes you thousands of typed letters less further than writing on a schedule: "people who wrote 'when they felt like it' were barely more productive than people told not to write at all" (p. 24).

Graduate Student? Zero in on Priorities

Some personalities flourish with structures, deadline, and routines. I'm one of those personalities. Other people rebel against any formal structure imposed on them. Yet, both personality styles, and the continuum in between, maintain high potential for success as academic writers and students.

To backtrack, in graduate studies, I was so banal when it came to routines that I slotted every half hour on my schedule with a particular task. While this practice appeared to be detail-oriented, the imposed structure failed to materialize with the heavy responsibility I faced as a graduate student. Such twisters require heavy assessment of priorities.

Despite all this complaining, Paul J. Silvia has some amazing tips for cementing your priorities, including the implementation of an SPSS (statistical package) software program for recording your every moment writing. If recording every minutia of your writing schedule on that software sounds scary, you are probably not a rule-oriented, structure-bound individual. If recording details excites you, you probably should consider either accounting or reading Paul J. Silvia's graduate student priority tips:

- Of course, you should prioritize assignments that contain an imposed deadline.
- If your writing time is insufficient, then bolster your time commitment by one or more hours per week.
- Prioritize the completion of your thesis. If you commit to your writing schedule, chances have it that you will draft material ready for publication in a journal. Prolific writers stick to schedules.
- Writing book reviews and publishing for magazines stand as secondary priorities, but priorities nonetheless.
- Delve headlong into books on writing or teaching, just to hone your mastery of these crafts.
- Ask your professor if he or she has any writing assignments that you could assist with completing.
- Create an SPSS statistical table that includes the days of the week, the hours or minutes you spent writing (or the number of words written), the project worked on, etc. Run statistics on your file, such as the mean number of words written each month.

Every Writing Manual's Prize: Tips for Brilliant Writing

In undergraduate studies, I entered the university as a blank slate. As an adult learner, deciphering the code of how to write at a university level baffled me. My education on writing sorely relied on a mere grammar book, which managed to leverage my grades in the A's once the momentum kicked in. Yet, at the graduate level, I was stupefied by how academics write like pros. My thesis supervisor advised me to take the summer off before

launching into graduate studies, as she deemed rest vital, yet, overhanging me lurked the reality that undergraduate level writing was insufficient for the challenges that await ahead.

Paul J. Silvia comes armed with strategies for improving your writing through simple tweaks:

- When doing research on subjects, don't describe them as "subjects" or "participants". Make a connection with the human beings you conduct research with by allotting them titles such as "older adults" or "teenage females."
- Avoid the use of abbreviations on simple words. Whatever you do, don't use the dumbfounding abbreviation "ANX" to substitute for the simple word "anxiety."
- Don't use the following extraneous words: " very, quite, basically, actually, virtually, extremely, remarkably, completely, at all" (p. 64), and so forth. They add little to your writing expression.
- If you use parallel structure, don't shy away from using repetition as repetition adds clarity. If you say, "People in the control situation demonstrated such-and-such behaviour while people in the special group demonstrated such-and-such behaviour", it comes across clearer than saying "People in the control situation demonstrated such-and-such behaviour while there were demonstrations of such-and-such variation over time in the special group."
- Use semicolons, dashes, en dashes, and em dashes. An en dash is to signify that parent-child doesn't mean a parent who is also a child. An em dash, which is slightly longer than a dash, signifies that it is a parent to child relationship.
- Don't ever use the words "such that". Replace "such that" with a colon or an em dash.
- Every time you use a variant of the word "to be", circle each incidence and change 1/3rd or more of them to livelier verbs without the "is".
- Every time you use the word "not", change it up by replacing it with "miss" or some other punchy verb.
- Avoid words ending in 'ive' to simpler verbs. For example, "to be indicative of" sounds better as "to indicate."
- Don't put "however", "therefore", and so forth at the beginning of a sentence. Couch them, moreover, at the next opportunity.

So You Long to Publish a Book?

I couldn't resist adding this final piece from Silvia's book. If you yearn to publish a book as an academic, realize that academic book publishers are sparse and in high demand. Yes, seek out an academic publisher at your next conference. Silvia states "They're better dressed than the professors and graduate students, and they're standing next to big tables containing lots of books" (p. 119). So edge your way over the bookstand, introduce yourself, and land a publishing contract.

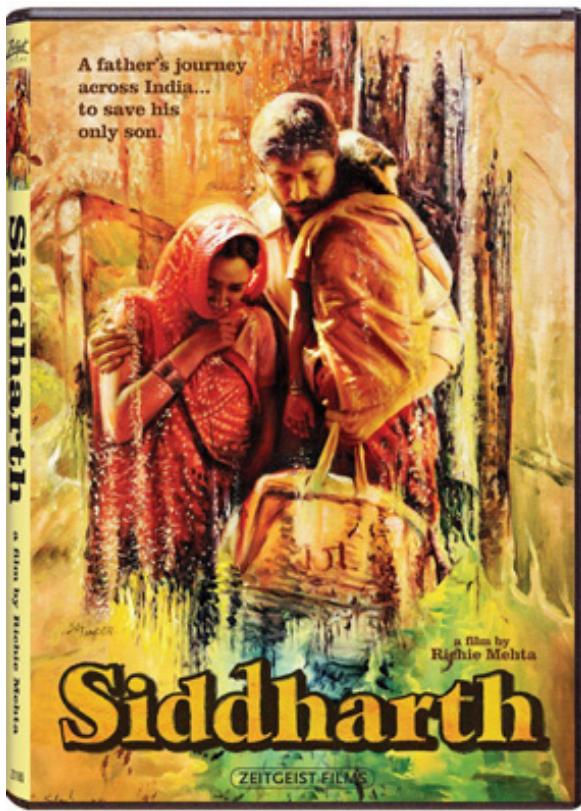
So, there's nothing to fear. The Study Dude is determined to make right for you all the wrongs I made in grad school—one A+ at a time.

References

Silvia, Paul J, PhD. (2007). *How to Write a Lot*. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

The Mindful Bard

Siddharth



Wanda Waterman

A Pied Piper Whose Name is Blind Avarice

Film: *Siddharth*

Director: Richie Mehta

Writers: Maureen Dorey and Richie Mehta

"Come away, O human child! To the waters and the wild
With a faery, hand in hand,
For the world's more full of weeping than you can
understand."

- from "The Stolen Child" by W.B. Yeats

"In 2010, I met a man on the streets of Delhi, who asked me for help in finding a place called Dongri. I asked him what it was, he told me he thought it was where his lost son was (!) He went on to tell me his story – that he sent his 12-year-old boy away to work, and never saw him again."

- Canadian film director Richie Mehta, director of *Siddharth*

Mahendra supports himself, his wife, and his two children by doing what his forefathers did—fixing zippers on the streets

of New Delhi. When he has difficulty making ends meet he sends his twelve-year-old son, Siddharth, to work in a factory in a distant town. The boy soon disappears, and thus begins his father's desperate search.

Mahendra and his wife have reason for concern. Child trafficking is a profitable business in India, with poor children being the most common targets. The abducted children are sent to work as domestics in the homes of the rich, to labour on sugarcane farms, to have their organs harvested, to beg on the streets, or to work as prostitutes. This is the dark underbelly of India's recent economic progress.

It's easy to condemn Mahendra for his decision to send his boy away to work, and other characters in the film often do just that. But Mahendra is a true working-class hero, awe-inspiring in his moral rectitude, dignity, and refusal to lower himself; in his search for his son he rejects the negative forecast of an astrologer and refuses to seek the help of criminal elements. Among the human examples of moral decadence that surround him, he shines like a firefly in a septic tank.

So what are we to think of his decision to send his boy away to work? For men like Mahendra, work is the thing that redeems. Uneducated and cut off from the tools of technology that might help him improve his lot in life or even to find alternatives to his present life, he sees work as the way to freedom and as the surest way to build an honest life. In this he is no different from my grandfather and many of the people from my rural Canadian village, people who didn't see the point of education because they were so cut off from a world in which education mattered.

I've often observed in Indian culture a great apathy, contrasted with a tremendous tenderness. There is (as

in the west but not as covert) a tremendous overvaluing of appearances, of worldly success, of physical beauty, and still, sorry to say, of maleness. In this context, a willingness to sacrifice social status in the name of love ain't fakin' it—the cost of loving what the society deems of little value is often that great. It's as if natural human attachments seem all the more intense—even subversive—because the striving for wealth and power has driven them underground. In a review of another Indian film, *The World Before Her*, I remarked on the loving defiance of Indian fathers who valued their daughters when other men were demanding that their wives abort female foetuses or even divorcing their wives for bearing too many girls.

In *Siddharth* we see the same contrast: Mahendra's desperation to find his beloved son while people respond to his questions about his son's disappearance with the most astonishing remarks, such as, "It's you who sent him away. If you can't find him, just have another one."

A street kid with fearfully dead eyes remarks: "Maybe he got lucky and left this world."

The film also brings another truth painfully home, and that's how in impoverished regions of the world advertising is an ugliness that can't be escaped; every wall promotes fetishes to be grabbed and idols to be worshipped, and desperate little hole-in-the-wall shops are decorated with massive posters of the beautiful life awaiting the affluent consumer.

What enabled the Pied Piper to steal the children of Hamelin? For one thing, the beautiful sound of his flute—in *Siddharth*, and in the frighteningly real situation it portrays, children are taken not by force but with promises of money, treats, beautiful clothes, and other highly valued commercial goods. Because this is what their society is constantly marketing to them and what they see their parents working so hard for, the children are sitting ducks waiting for a tempter to lead them to their doom.

Siddharth manifests seven of the Mindful Bard's criteria for films well worth seeing.

- 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 inspires an awareness of the sanctity of creation.
- It displays an engagement with and compassionate response to suffering.
- It gives me tools of kindness, enabling me to respond with compassion and efficacy to the suffering around me.
- 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.

Student Sizzle AU's Hot Social Media Topics

Following what's hot around AU's social media sites.



AthaU Facebook Group

Laurie wants to know what the average wait time is for an exam mark. Lorena seeks help uploading an assignment file that exceeds the maximum allowable file size. Jodi looks for input about visiting Athabasca for a Biology lab. And Janielle hopes someone can explain the difference between "deductive" and "inductive" for her PHIL 152 course. Other postings include the exam invigilation network, missing reading file pages, and courses ADMN 232 and 233, MATH 215 and 265, NUTR 330 and 331, PHYS 200 and 201, plus CRJS 370, ENGL 316, PHIL 252, and PSYC 290.

Twitter

@AthabascaU tweets info for students taking exams at AU: "Keep Your Property Safe During Exams <http://iamau.ca/1NRgJLV>." And on Apr 6, @AU_Business tweets: "The front page of today's #GlobeandMail features @AthabascaU and the #HockeyMBA <http://ow.ly/LfDNA>."

Click of the Wrist

April—the month when temperatures rise, flowers bloom, and the air is full of scents and sights and sounds so rich it's an adventure just to walk outdoors. What better time to celebrate National Poetry Month and the way language can create such an atmosphere of its own? Click through this week's links to get some wide perspectives on poetry:

Daily Dose

National Poetry Month is a great opportunity to enjoy both classic poetry and the lesser-known work of famous poets and unknowns alike. The Academy of American Poets posts daily poems on their Poem A Day page. Sign up and get your daily dose delivered to your inbox!

Live Out Loud

Many poems aren't only meant to be read, but also to be spoken. Poetry Out Loud, a national US-based contest, is geared to students, but poetry lovers of all ages can take advantage of the wealth of information on the site. From video "examples of great recitations" to articles on "the art of recitation," it'll show you a side of poetry you might never have considered before.

Food for Thought

What's the connection between poetry and food? The League of Canadian Poets explores this question during their month-long Food & Poetry blog event, which features poet interviews, food-themed poetic works, and a spotlight on local events across Canada—featuring nourishment for both body *and* mind.



National Poetry Month

Music Review

Singles from Fable Cry



Samantha Stevens

Singles: "Onion Grin" and "Fancy Dancing"

Band: Fable Cry

As an English major I have read my fair share of fairy-tales, myths, and legends. But as a musical person, I always wondered what they would sound like, or perhaps what the characters were singing to themselves as they ventured off to save someone, or the villains sang to the heroes in boastful gloating. Well, after listening to Fable Cry's latest singles, I now have my answer.

From Nashville, Tennessee, Fable Cry creates music that has been described as a combination

between Danny Elfman, Queen, and Gogol Bordello. There is a vaudeville feel to the music, with Gypsy musical influences that will carry you away to a land where myths and legends are real. Their music is almost like the fairy-tales we all know have come to life in all of their splendour, suspense, and darkness.

The singles are from the band's sophomore album, *We'll Show You Where the Monsters Are*, due out this summer. And if the singles are any indicator, the album is going to be a ton of fun and I am very much looking forward to it.

"Onion Grin" starts very dramatically with the violin setting the mood. The subtle sound of a knife sharpening gives a hint to the nature of the song. The singing is wonderfully suspenseful, and if listened to carefully, you begin to understand that the song is from the point of view of the villain. Specifically, it is the wolf from "Little Red Riding Hood" expressing his frustration with chasing the well-known heroine. Although the band is drawing from a story that almost everyone knows, "Onion Grin" is delightfully macabre, and leaves you thinking about the tale differently.

"Fancy Dancing" is very much influenced by Gypsy music with its sorrowful, crying violin and inventive accompanying sounds. The whimsical vocals tell the story of a hero who comes across a rather unsavoury character who offers to tell his fortune. The singing switches from the hero and villain to carry the story along. As the hero's future is revealed, or rather hinted at, the music cleverly picks up in intensity. And very much like a fairy-tale, the song gradually builds to an epic climax that leaves the listener in awe, and then its story abruptly ends.

And if listening to the imaginative tale isn't enough, Fable Cry also created a video for the song. The video is dark, as it is set at night, but it offers some background information of the tale. What I like most about the video, other than the fact that it is a short movie, is that you get to see the band's fantastically imaginative costumes.

I am eagerly awaiting the release of their album. So if you are a fan of unique music and a new spin on old tales then check out Fable Cry on their website or Facebook page.

Samantha Stevens is an aspiring writer who loves combining her love for literature with photography, painting, music, and all creative pursuits.

Time Crunch

Deanna Roney



never taken the time to physically schedule my time in my day-planner. I typically have a date in mind, when I would like to finish, and I work toward that.

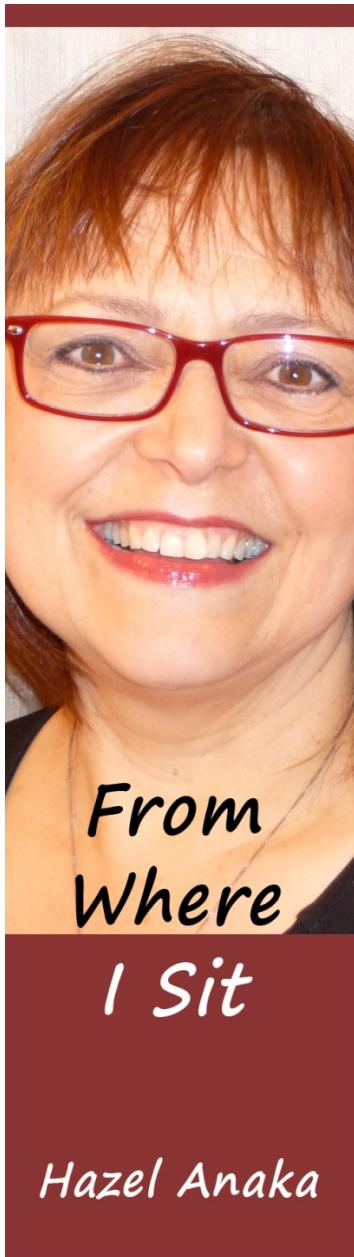
I have read about the importance of writing things down; spending the time to plot out the course—but, I never did. Instead I relied on my intuition, if I was mentally exhausted at the end of the day I was happy. The problem with keeping an invisible schedule is that I do not see my progress. I do not feel gratification at the end of the day if I only complete part of a unit, or only spent a few hours on school. This leads me back to that feeling of guilt and not being able to fully relax for an evening; always having that voice nagging me, saying, "you should be doing school."

I finally decided it was time to make a change. The stress I laid on myself was beginning to take its toll. I scheduled something for each day, I even scheduled breaks (Sunday) and catch up days (every other Saturday) and already I can see the benefit to scheduling this way. I look ahead to Monday and I can see exactly what I need to do. I can see when, in theory, I will complete the course (which answers the question that plagues me every other month on the 9th "do I order my next two courses?") And, if I have not allowed myself enough time for some activities, I can easily adjust my schedule accordingly.

By writing things down, by writing down my goals, I, so far, have not felt like I have fallen behind. I do not feel like I have not spent enough time at school. I feel as though my mind has taken a sigh of relief. No longer am I trying to keep track of my time in the back of my mind while I work on assignments. It is all laid out, day by day, I work to finish each task. But, if I do not finish on the scheduled day I have a contingency plan in place.

I always thought, "Yes! That is a great idea!" when I read articles about the importance of scheduling your time. But I never followed through with doing it myself. I would schedule assignments, sometimes, but nothing else. If you are like me, I highly recommend taking the time and physically plotting your time. It is not that hard once you get started, and it is completely worth the time it takes. I have even scheduled in time to schedule my next set of courses.

Deanna Roney is an AU student who loves adventure in life and literature.



Embrace or Withdraw

One of the benefits of coordinating Babas and Borsch Ukrainian Festival the last couple years has been the personal satisfaction of facing a challenge head-on and succeeding. Regular Voice readers may remember that in January 2013 I pitched the idea of a brand new festival and 227 days later saw it come to fruition. It was well received, well attended, and has been followed up by an improved and equally successful year two. Plans for year three are humming along.

That said; one of the other pleasures of this undertaking has been the people I've met. By and large they've been talented, passionate, accomplished, and generous in sharing their gifts. They either agreed to be part of the festival in some capacity or referred me to someone else who could help.

In one such example I first spoke to a female event planner from Edmonton on the phone. She agreed to accompany me to a wholesale she deals with so I could buy décor pieces at a better price. In that short exchange we hit it off and voiced the desire to get together again.

Then we *acted on* what could have been simply the usual superficial hollow talk people often engage in. We made plans. I introduced B to the salon where I get my nails done. Getting a mani-pedi guarantees at least a couple of hours of pampering and plenty of time to talk. Following that treat up with an incredible extended lunch at Tirimisu Bistro lightens my mood for hours after.

It always amazes me how empowering and soul affirming a conversation with a kindred spirit can be. And you don't need the long-term history of having known a person since kindergarten to make that connection. You don't need to communicate daily. You don't need to vacation together.

What works in the life of this busy person is being committed to nurturing the relationship, carving out time that works for both of us, being fully present and enjoying every minute, and then going back to my messy real life. NASA would have been proud of what it took to plan our outing this past week but we persevered and did it.

Despite me being about ten years older than B, we connect and commiserate on many topics. I'm past the critical child-rearing years but have grandsons. We both understand the challenges of being part of the 'sandwich' generation. We share the knowledge that we're both round pegs who don't fit into the square holes of the nine to five traditional workplace. We understand the thrill and terror of finding the next gig. While she considers me her mentor, I'm learning from her as well. We support each other in whatever our individual lives have thrown us. We recognize the strength (and vulnerability) in the other.

People come and go in our lives. It's up to us to embrace those who enrich our lives and withdraw from those who damage it, 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*

Barbara Godin

When the Bill Comes Due

Dear Barb:

I have just completed my last course at AU and will be graduating soon. Also, I am starting a new job next week. I have been dating my boyfriend for three years and we are planning on moving in together. He has been working for almost five years, so he is well established in his career and making good money. The problem is that when we move in together he thinks we should share the expenses 50/50. I don't agree with this since I will be making almost half of what he is making, as I'm just beginning my career. I feel he should pay a larger portion of the bills, what do you think? Carly

Hi there Carly:

Congrats to you for completing university and getting a job so quickly! I understand your concern and I think you are right about the expenses. I believe your boyfriend should be required to pay the expenses in accordance with his income. For example, if he makes 50% more than you then he should be paying 50 % more of the expenses than you would pay. That seems fair to me, however it's a totally personal decision between you both how you want to divide the expenses. Strive to come to a compromise that is pleasing for both of you. It's actually very good that you are discussing this before you move in together, as you don't want to start off your relationship with financial issues. I would suggest you open a joint account and each put in a percentage of your income into this account for bill payments. As time goes on you can always adjust these amounts. Thanks for writing and good luck to you both!

Dear Barb:

I recently lost my job and I have not been able to find another one. I am now having severe financial problems and really don't know where to turn. I admit, I've been frivolous with my money in the past and don't have any savings. I don't want to go to my parents as I know I will get a lecture. I am sure I will eventually be able to find a good job as I do have a trade, but I need some help until then. Not sure if I should bite the bullet and tell my parents of my situation, as I'm sure they would help me. Thanks Ken.

Hi Ken:

It's noble that realize you haven't handled your money well in the past. As parents we never stop parenting our kids no matter how old they get. We are always hoping that maybe this time they will get it. If you really need the money I guess you will have bite the bullet, and ask your parents. Be thankful your parents that are willing and able to help you. Happy job hunting Ken!

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

Comic

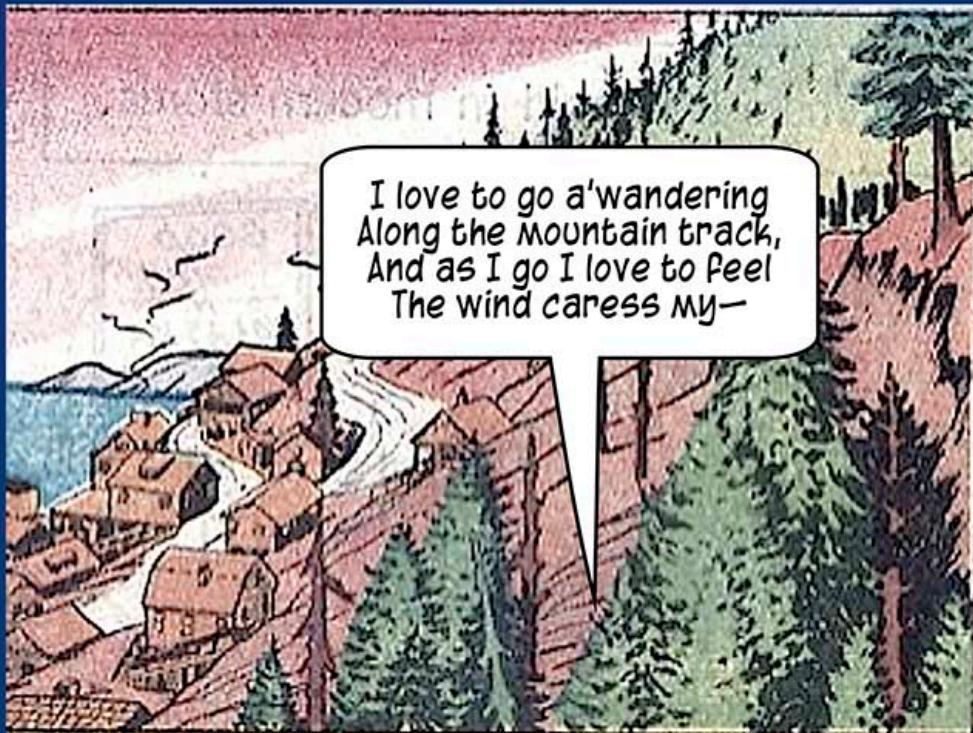
Wanda Waterman

Weird Canada

NUDE HIKING IN JANUARY

POLICE IN COQUITLAM, BRITISH COLUMBIA, ARE STILL SEARCHING FOR A YOUNG WHITE MALE, SPOTTED THREE TIMES IN JANUARY HIKING IN NOTHING BUT A BACKPACK AND EARBUDS.

BUT WITH TYPICAL CANADIAN GOOD MANNERS, WHEN PEOPLE APPROACH HE HIDES BEHIND A TREE.



I love to go a'wandering
Along the Mountain track,
And as I go I love to feel
The wind caress my—

WRITTEN BY WANDA WATERMAN



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AUSU's AGM & April Council Meeting

AUSU will be holding this year's Annual General Meeting on Tuesday, April 21, 2015 at 5:30pm MST.

The AGM is a great opportunity to attend an AUSU council meeting, take part in discussions, and vote on agenda items. The AUSU Annual Report is also presented at the AGM which reviews some of the projects that AUSU Council has completed over the past year and provides financial information for the last fiscal year. Please go to <http://www.ausu.org/> for the official notice and agenda.

All members are welcome to attend and take part. To receive call in information, please RSVP with our office by email ausu@ausu.org, by phone 1-855-497-7003, or through the chat feature on our website www.ausu.org.

Great AU Finds Online

Am I Ready? Counselling Assessments – A series of review modules to test your skill in a variety of subjects. Use these to determine if you need to brush up on a subject before diving in to a course, or just for fun. Also, Mapping Your Future help you choose an occupation. For links, see:

http://counselling.athabascau.ca/assess_yourself.php

AUSU Featured Groups & Clubs

Group Name: Athabasca University Faculty of Science and Technology

Where: Facebook

Members: 275 Likes

About: Posts related to the FST and its students

Activity: Regular posts each week or every two weeks.

IMPORTANT DATES

- April 3-6: Easter Weekend – AU & AUSU closed
- April 10: Last day to register for courses starting May 1
- April 21: AGM & AUSU Council Meeting
- April 30: Last day to extend courses ending May 30
- May 8: Last business day to register for courses starting June 1



This Week at lynda.com

lynda.com experts have curated playlists to get you started. With hundreds of lists on a variety of subjects, there is something for everyone. Visit the playlist center for more information and enter the playlist title. This week's featured list:

Increased Productivity

The following three video is essential for new students because distance education can be daunting. Setting small, reachable goals and learning how to boost productivity with time management are keys to a successful start.

Firstly, there is a short (just over 11 minutes) video about managing your time by Todd Dewett called Managing Your Time.

Secondly, if you are interested in a course about productivity and managing time, you could watch Enhancing Your Productivity, by Dave Crenshaw. This course discusses

1. Your most valuable activities
2. Building up coworkers
3. Having focus

Lastly, there is a course called Achieving Your Goals, by Dave Crenshaw, that explains how to set measurable and achievable goals.

Have you signed up for lynda? It's free for AUSU members. To learn more, check out ausu.org/services/lynda.php

CLASSIFIEDS

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

THE VOICE

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