

THE VOICE

MAGAZINE

Vol 23 Issue 18 2015-05-01

Meeting the Minds

Dr. George Siemens, II

Love After Loss

Getting Past the Grief

Maghreb Voices

The Tunisian Cafe

Plus:

A Course Made Real

Years Behind: Lessons Learned

and much more!



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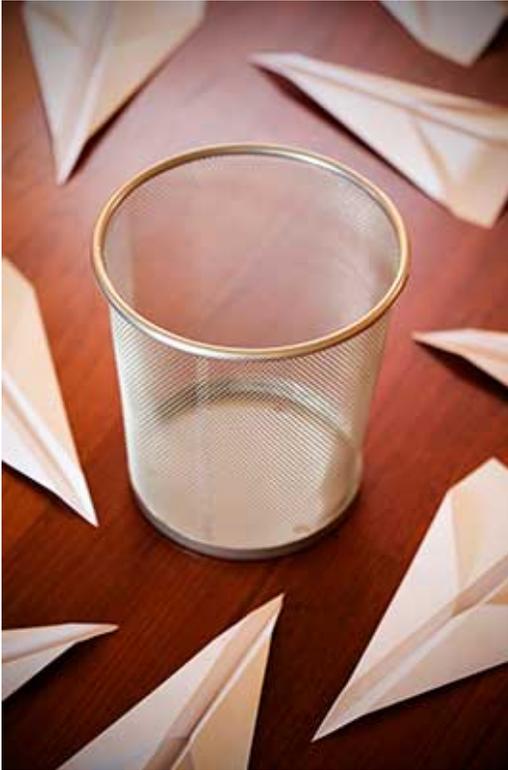
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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR



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**Era's End****Karl Low**

If the latest polls are to be believed, we may be in the last days of the 43 year reign of the Progressive Conservative party in Alberta. On August 30, 1971, the Progressive Conservatives were elected to a majority government in Alberta.

I hadn't even been born.

The very first president of Athabasca University, Timothy C. Byrne, had been appointed only five months previous, and the university wasn't scheduled to open to students for another two years. It was located in Edmonton at the time, not moving up to Athabasca until 1984.

Personal computers didn't exist. And the internet? Not even science fiction was predicting anything like it.

That's how long the PC's have been in power in Alberta.

That's what, according to the most recent polls, is now ending.

It really is the end of an era. So it's understandable if many people in Alberta are worried, perhaps even a little scared, at what might come next. After all, we're moving into unfamiliar territory here.

Of course, many people are just the opposite. They're excited. They've been waiting for this day for, literally, decades. But no matter what happens on May 5th, one thing that I'm sure has already occurred is that the federal parties are re-evaluating what they need to do this October. Alberta's been so reliably conservative for so many years that even our own MPs don't bother campaigning here anymore. The rallying cry always was that "The West Wants In", but, until now, we've never shown that we're willing to take steps to make that happen.

Even if the polls turn out to be wrong and the Alberta PCs succeed once more, the people of Alberta have put out notice, clear and forcefully, that we cannot be taken for granted any more. It will be interesting to see what effects this has on the upcoming federal election.

But that's a good distance out, yet. Another 23 issues or so of *The Voice Magazine*. So, instead, let's concentrate on this issue, where our features are the (much delayed) second part of our interview with Dr. George Siemens, and an article by Barb Godin on dealing with, perhaps somewhat appropriately, how to move forward in life after a significant loss. We also have our usual selection of columns, reviews, and interviews, and writers Philip Kirkbride and Barbara Lehtiniemi add their point of view to the controversy over the recent happenings involving *The Voice Magazine*. Fortunately, things seem to be getting back to normal on that front, which means that all that's left for you to do is enjoy the read!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Karl", is positioned in the bottom right corner of the page.

MEETING THE MINDS

INTERVIEWS with AU's EDUCATORS



Dr. George Siemens is the founder of the theory of connectivism in education. Recently, he kindly consented to be interviewed by Marie Well of The Voice Magazine. Dr. Siemens was happy to provide us with very in-depth answers, and so this is the second of three parts of that interview. The first part can be found in [issue 14](#).

Marie Well: *You have also authored the book "Knowing Knowledge" which explores the changing context of knowledge. How has knowledge changed over time and how does this affect organizations?*

Dr. George Siemens: That's a long topic. I'll try and address it without reading a book to you. The general idea is that in a knowledge age, such as we are in now, there is a more rapid development of information and knowledge globally, and partly that is due to a few factors. One, we have more advanced technologies and we have more opportunities to engage in global interactions. We can be connected with people from around the world with literally the click of a button. An example that I use to emphasize this frequently is in 2003 when the SARS epidemic developed, what is often ignored in that conversation is that the way in which the SARS epidemic was identified and addressed was through a global knowledge network. Individuals from different research labs, CDC or Atlanta, an office in Winnipeg, one in Japan and in Europe and in Hong Kong and other regions, all shared information with each other as their labs shut down. When their day was done, they would pass their research they had done to another lab.

The biggest thing that has happened is that knowledge has become networked. Because it is networked, we can do different things with it. We can work on it simultaneously. We can have things moved to publication, theoretically at least, more rapidly. We can have more opportunities to engage in greater socialization around that. Rather than saying, "I'm working on a project and the only time I get to talk to my colleagues is either if I get to call them or if I meet them at annual conferences that we both attend," suddenly you have an opportunity to collaborate by any range of technologies that we just spoke of and we can essentially in real time get work done. Academics now are involved in global research teams at a level that they just weren't twenty years ago. Global research was obviously happening, but it wasn't as well connected and less under the control of the individual academic as it is today.

Knowledge is developing more rapidly. Because it is developing more rapidly, this idea of the half-life of knowledge is important to focus on as well. Half-life of knowledge essentially states how long does it take for half the knowledge in a particular area or discipline to become obsolete because new ideas have come along or

new research has been conducted. You have probably experienced that with the kinds of technologies you have access to. You are not going to use the same laptop for ten years. You might say, have a bed at home that you've had for a decade, fifteen years, or however long people keep a bed. Whereas, with mobile devices and even with laptop computers, you replace them every couple of years. You are not keeping them for as long of a period of time as you did in the past. That is reflective of how things are developing and changing with not just knowledge, but everything ranging from healthcare, to educational practices, to social concerns, and so on. As a result, we end up needing a different approach to work with that knowledge that we had in the past. That was the essential point I was trying to make in the book *Knowing Knowledge*.

Marie Well: Not only are you highly acclaimed as a researcher, but you've also made a monumental achievement pioneering the connectivist theory. Please tell us about connectivism and how you approached such groundbreaking theory generation.

Dr. George Siemens: The idea with connectivism is essentially what we have been talking about, which is that knowledge is a networked entity and the approach to learning, then, is a essentially one of forming or navigating or contributing to those connections. That is essentially it. It means that rather than a classroom setting with the instructor primarily lecturing, you need to adopt models and approaches that the individual student, everyone, other academics from other institutions, have opportunities to become engaged in that experience of teaching, learning, and so on.

An argument I was trying to make was that, when we learn transparently, we actually teach others. What I mean is if I'm learning a new concept or topic, and I write about it on a blog or on the Landing, or I talk about it in a course I'm either teaching or taking, being transparent about my learning makes it so that other people who are watching me have the opportunity then to see that as a teaching opportunity. Just as when someone else is transparent about their learning, when I read the work they are doing, they are teaching me. That is an important element: In order to become more effective as a society at solving complex and often intractable problems, what starts to become highly relevant is our ability to be able to dialogue about topics and ideas.

This is reflective in one of the examples that was shared in the book called *The Long Tale*, about how in the 1970s or so, you would see the vast majority of household American statistics, although these wouldn't be too far off in Canada, where 60 to 70% of households in the U.S. would go to work on Monday having seen "I Love Lucy", the TV show, so there was a fairly common and consistent narrative around the social practices and media experiences. Today, the most watched shows include NCIS and that is only seen by 10 or 12% of individuals. What has happened is that we fragmented our interaction with our TV programs, but we have done the same thing with knowledge.

That means, instead of being able to assume that the people around us know what we know, which is as relevant now as it may have been in the past, all of a sudden now we are at a point where everyone around us can be an educator because they know different things and have different tools. They don't have to be around us, they can be anywhere globally. You can take a course on a MOOC platform, or you can engage in reading their blog or commenting on it, or watching a YouTube video or TED talks. There are just a broad range of opportunities now that enable everyone to be a teacher and everyone to be a learner. That is something I think we've never had historically in humanity.

Marie Well: What courses have you taught and what courses have you designed at Athabasca?

Dr. George Siemens: I taught a number of courses. The one that I designed is on Openness in Education, which looks at the ways in which freely sharing academic resources can help make the education experience stronger and provide a better learning experience for students. I've taught courses on instructional design at the doctoral

level, which is a course that looks at advanced techniques for teaching. I am currently teaching a doctoral course on advanced research method. I've also taught the introduction to distance education as well, at a master's level. I've taught a number of open courses in MOOC format. They are not always directly affiliated with Athabasca University. I've taught everything from connectivism to connected knowledge to personal learning environments--and just finished a course on EdEX that looks at data analytics and learning in the education process, and so on. Generally anything that relates to the influence of technology on processes is an area I find to be an interest.

Instructional design deals with technology to a degree. The research evidence is quite clear that the technology isn't the most vital part of the learning process. In fact, it is a well-designed learning experience that is supported by technology that is valuable. We now have a technology dimension to everything that we do, whether it is our banking, our healthcare, going to see a dentist, digital files, digital xrays, the digital dimension is there. The role of technology in learning was articulated by Richard Clark many years ago and has come to be known as the Clark and Kozma debate. Richard Clark's argument was that the technology makes no more difference to the learning processes than a truck that delivers food to a grocery store makes an impact on the nutrition of the food.

The idea was, and I think it is one that many folks may accept or at least recognize as a valid argument is that what is more important than using the latest technologies is having thought through and designed the learning experience well. Do we have the right level of support from faculty? Do we have the right kind of social interaction planned, and so on, as that it what ultimately makes a big difference to the student and to the success of the teaching.

Marie Well: What is your approach to course design?

Dr. George Siemens: It depends on the course. Generally, when we are looking at designing a course, the approach is to make sure at first you are addressing a topic area that is relevant for a range of individuals. You have to know who your audience is and who is going to be taking the course. Consider it from the point of view of a single or a few individuals. Will there be some industry folks involved? Is it something people will be taking to improve their career prospects? Are they taking the course for personal benefits or personal reasons? That is one of the bigger questions: the idea that you ask, "Who is your audience?" Who is going to be taking your course? What is their expected benefit from taking the course?

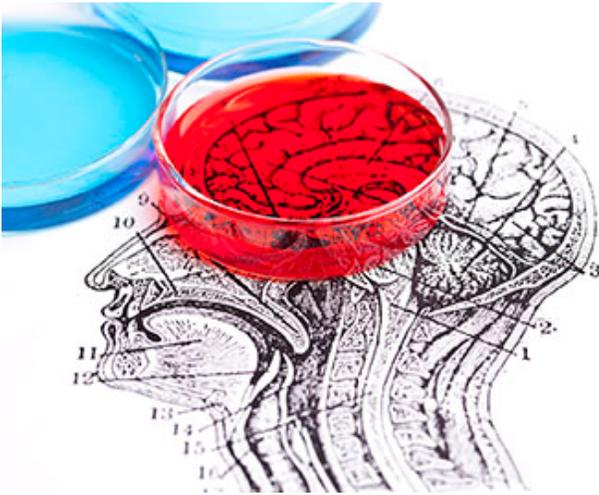
From there, it is important to add a thorough scoping of literature so that the prominent and important articles are identified, and the outliers that might indicate promising future directions can be identified. The articles that haven't received as much attention, for whatever reason, could contain important ideas or counter ideas, so are also brought into it.

Having identified the audience and the content, I think it is important to start articulating what kind of learning you would like them to do through the course. How are you going to communicate a certain idea? Is a specific paper going to be valuable enough to give them a deep understanding of it? How do you take the ideas and concepts that they encounter in the readings and how do you develop a series of activities around it that enable them to really deeply and thoroughly understand what the topics are? Then, finally, the ways in which you start to do your assessments are critical. Do the assessments you have for the course reflect the outcomes assigned for the course? Do they reflect the type of content that was taught and the learning activities that were engaged in? There needs to be some alignment between course assigned outcomes, course content, and the assessment that is being undertaken.

Primal Numbers

Your Brain on Money

S.D. Livingston



You don't have to go to an Ivy League school to know that money brings educational advantages. Everything from good nutrition to new textbooks can affect grades. Now, science has shown that being wealthy can affect your brain's anatomy, with a measurable increase in the size of your cortex. But does that really mean money can buy brains?

The news comes from a team led by Harvard and MIT researchers. As *Psychological Science* [reports](#), the study involved a group of students aged 12 and 13. The students came from two economic groups. One was defined as low-income, "those who qualify for a free or reduced-price school lunch," while the other

group was from "higher-income families."

Two measurements lined up with remarkable correlation among the students: performance on standardized tests, and the thickness of their brain cortex. Specifically, the areas of the cortex that have to do with "visual perception and knowledge accumulation."

You probably won't be surprised to learn that the students from higher-income families had thicker cortices and higher test scores than students in the low-income group. Yet it's important not to assume that money itself will guarantee academic success—or vice versa.

True, money can create an atmosphere that provides every advantage for learning. After all, it's a whole lot easier to focus when you've got a full stomach, a quiet space, fast Internet for doing research, and current textbooks. But so much of the equation still depends on the students themselves.

A student with every material advantage could also be the one who fritters away his time surfing the Net or cruising around in the high-end car that the bank of mom and dad bought. Or maybe she'd rather hit the malls and clubs while a major essay gets a sloppy last-minute effort. Bigger cortex or not, they aren't going to be top of the class.

And here's the other big factor that can override any economic advantage: the amount of encouragement a student gets from the people around them. As the research team noted, their findings "don't mean that further educational support, home support, all those things, couldn't make big differences."

In fact, that would be another interesting study for the researchers to do. Rather than separating test groups by income level, researchers might take students from all economic groups and compare them based on the strength of their social environment. Viewed from that angle, the results could show that getting the right teacher or having a supportive family gives someone a big edge in test scores and brain scans.

Then there's the fact that intelligence comes in all different flavours. Great at English essays? That doesn't mean you've got the kind of brainpower to become a financial wizard. Like mogul Francois Pinault, who, as

Business Insider [reports](#), built a fashion empire and is worth some 15 billion dollars, even though he was so poor that he was bullied out of school.

And standardized test scores don't always reveal the kind of scientific genius of a Marie Curie—a brilliant mathematician who didn't have the money to pursue a math degree until she was awarded a scholarship.

Clearly, money is good for your brain in lots of ways, including a bigger cortex. Just don't expect it to buy you that A-plus.

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.



Maghreb Voices

The Tunisian Café, Part I



The Moorish-style terraces of the Café of Mats in Sidi Bou Said were once graced with the presences of Simone de Beauvoir, André Gide, Paul Klee, and other early twentieth century notables.

Wanda Waterman

Caffeine Oasis in a Wayward Urban Desert

"I'd much rather hang out in a cafe. That's where things are really happening."
- Joe Sacco

My husband, Ahmed, promises me a special treat: he's going to take me to his favourite café. My vision of an incense-clouded grotto with belly dancers twisting to the *dherbouka* and *mezwed* is soon vaporised by the sight of a grimy cafe with a grimier, all-male clientele, one big room furnished with old plastic garden furniture whose original whiteness is embarrassed by stains and scratches. The thick tobacco smoke fails to mask a melange of unsavoury odours.

"This is your favourite cafe?" I ask him. "How can you stand it? You're such a clean freak!"

"It's simple," he chuckles, "It's close to home and all my friends come here."

It turns out to be a little more complicated than that. In the Arab world the male habit of visiting a cheap, males-only café like this one at least once a day is practically written in stone.

I've often heard foreign women complain about how irked they were when their husbands left them at home in the evening to go and visit a café, abandoning a lovely new bride or a visiting girlfriend to drink coffee and gab for hours, often at cafés they hate and with companions that grate them.

Arab wives who chafe at the custom sometimes phone their husbands at the café every fifteen minutes asking them when they're coming home, but for the most part Arab wives are glad to get the men out of the house, and they wouldn't be caught dead in cafés like this one.

Luckily I'm not obliged to enter Ahmed's favourite café, which I've since christened "Café Elegante." We sit outside and I order a green tea. Later Ahmed's brother asks me how I liked the tea. I tell him, to his delight, that it tasted like someone had wrung out a sponge.

I can't exactly report on men's cafe culture in Tunisia because, being of the female persuasion, I can't enter that culture without attracting a lot of unwanted attention. But I can tell you that the experience of drinking tea or coffee in any of these establishments is pretty much the same—in mixed cafés (often called "tea salons") the only differences are higher prices, cleaner surroundings, nicer decor, and a clientele made up of both men and women. (If you want to know more about the men-only cafes, I vouch for the accuracy of this piece: <http://www.tunisia-live.net/2013/08/19/tunisias-cafes-cheap-simple-and-all-male/>.)



Many of the cafés like Dar El Cherif in Gafsa cater to tourists seeking a desert nomad ambience.

Café life here in Tunisia is a microcosm of the separate spheres polarising this country— masculine and feminine, right and left, rich and poor, religious and licentious, etc. If you want to understand this country, do like the Tunisians do and hang out in its cafés; it's a great, cheap way to get out of the house, be waited on, meet friends, talk, and connect with the locals.

But first you have to find your favourite café in whatever town you happen to be in. When we were in Gafsa I liked the Dar El Cherif for its old Araby atmosphere. In Hammamet the Café Flora presents a luxury escape. In Nabeul my favourite cafe was The Errachidia, also with a nice *Arabian Nights* decor. Here in Manouba where I now live I'm partial to the Chateau, an old castle with a pleasant garden.

But hands down, bar none, my favourite café in Tunisia is La Boheme. But more about that—and the Tunisian café experience—in next week's issue.

(to be continued)



Le Chateau is a café in Manouba, converted from a small castle.

Years Behind: Lessons Learned

Deanna Roney



When I made the decision to go back to school the majority of my high-school grad class had already graduated from university. Some had completed their graduate studies, and had moved onto jobs in their respective fields post-graduation. The ones that chose not to pursue education were finding their way up their personal career ladders and having families. I felt like I was years behind.

I wavered between going to university and choosing my own "ladder." After dropping out of University in my first year, I returned to my hometown, a small town with little opportunity. I struggled to find my passion; I helped to start a co-operative arts centre, and worked in my way up in an optometrist office from dispenser to pre-tester. What I found was that in each job, or each passion, after a year or two I would get bored. I would come to the end of the ladder, a dead end. It was hard to make the choice to return to school at an age where I should have already completed it. Hard to realise that the choices I had made previously were not the right choices. Going back to school meant that I had been wrong; it can be a hard lesson to learn.

When I dropped out of University I had been enrolled in the equivalent of a Bachelor of Fine Arts. I never felt like I really belonged in that area of study though I perused fine arts even after dropping out of school. I did not know which direction I wanted to take my education. If I completed a Fine Arts degree, what would I do with it? Not knowing is something which I think is important to embrace, rather than fear. And when I made the choice to attend Athabasca University I did not know what I wanted to do at the end of it all. But had I waited until I had a definite answer I likely would still be waiting to start. While I still do not have an answer to the question, "what are you going to do with your degree?" what I do have is a general direction.

Embracing the unknown leaves you open for growth and development. When I began with AU I declared my major: English. I started with a passion for literature and writing and allowed it to evolve on its own. My degree grew from a lone major, to declaring a minor in Women's and Gender Studies (WGST). This minor I could not have predicted. If I had been rigid in my program plan, I would not have allowed myself to explore other options, and find that WGST was my other passion.

WGST and ENGL complement each other. Both are fairly well grounded in history, which I find amusing as I disliked history in high-school. Sometimes we have to disregard the past, and move forward with no preconceived ideas of what we should be doing. We have to take our own path; sometimes going to university straight out of high-school does not work, sometimes it does.

For myself, allowing time between high-school and university allowed me to learn about myself and understand what I want out of life, (and what I do not want.) One of the most influential lessons is to allow for change, to enter with an open mind and blur the lines a little; you never know where it will lead. You may just find yourself living the life you dreamed about, and never thought was possible.

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

Writer's Toolbox

A Recipe for Eggcorns

Christina M. Frey



No, don't get out your mixing bowls—we're not making omelettes here. In fact, if you've used an eggcorn today, you probably did so without realizing it. This week we'll look at where these oddly named phenomena come from, and how you can eliminate them in your own writing and speaking.

What Came First?

Eggcorns are idiomatic expressions, sayings, and other phrases that are misheard and then misquoted. The misquoted version is then passed around, making it spread far beyond the originator—and perpetuating the confusion.

Eggcorn Example A: His trip seems to have given him a new leash on life.

Correct Example A: His trip seems to have given him a new lease on life.

Eggcorn Example B: I am finally caught up with paperwork, for all intensive purposes.

Correct Example B: I am finally caught up with paperwork, for all intents and purposes.

See how easily the ear and tongue can slip up here? Typically these are phrases that sound similar and that aren't too far off the mark in terms of meaning, either, so the brain's less likely to question the usage. "When all is set and done" sounds pretty legit when you think about it—but it's actually an eggcorn for "when all is said and done."

Over Time

Most of the time eggcorns are obviously misquotes of a known original, but sometimes they become so common that the original can look wrong instead:

Eggcorn Example C: Don't pawn off the dirty jobs on me!

Correct Example C: Don't palm off the dirty jobs on me!

Eggcorn Example D: I'd say she got her just desserts.

Correct Example D: I'd say she got her just deserts.

In fact, if you look at language trend analyzers like Google Ngram Viewer, you can sometimes see the correct usage slowly ceding place to the eggcorn. In these cases—where ordinary people might think your correct version is an error—it's often better to use a different phrase entirely.

Note too that eggcorns sometimes fall into favour due to questionable etymological origins of the original. For example, "butt naked" is an eggcorn for the phrase "buck naked"; while experts disagree over whether the word "buck" has racist overtones, "butt naked" is a more neutral option (and it sounds pretty accurate, too).

Rooting Out the Problem

How to spot eggcorns in your own writing and speaking, when you're probably using them without knowing it? Reading widely is your best defense. Grab a dictionary of idioms or regionalisms if you can (libraries often have copies) and look up anything that seems questionable.

The collaborative [Eggcorn Database](#) is another great resource (and a wonderful place for language lovers to kill time!), and Google's [Ngram Viewer](#) allows you to compare multiple versions of a given phrase. You can also run searches in the news, on Twitter, and in other social media for new blog posts or linguistic meanderings on eggcorns growing or declining in popularity.

The intersection of hearing, speaking, and writing is one of the most fascinating areas of linguistics, and exploring eggcorns makes a wonderful introduction to the field. Give *free reign* (hint: that's an eggcorn) to your curiosity and you'll be on your way to becoming a *bonified* (another one) linguist!

Christina M. Frey is a book editor, literary coach, and lover of great writing. For more tips and techniques for your toolbox, follow her on Twitter (@turntopage2) or visit her [blog](#).



Opinion: The Value of The Voice

Barbara Lehtiniemi



The Voice Magazine provides more value to students than any other single AUSU program or benefit. And, since it continues to provide increasing value to an increasing number of students, AUSU has no reason—no legitimate reason—to silence the magazine.

AUSU Council quietly announced—via a meeting notice posted on its website—in early April that they would seek a bylaw change at the April 21, 2015 Annual General Meeting to replace *The Voice Magazine* with a Writer-in-Residence. After a couple uncomfortable weeks of student backlash,

AUSU quietly announced—this time via its Facebook page—that it would remove those proposed bylaw items from the meeting agenda, and address "concerns with *The Voice*" sometime in the future.

AUSU Council's stated reasons for having concerns with *The Voice* is that the magazine is not performing well ("dismal" was the way they described it), is not benefiting many students, and is not providing student-related content. I disagree.

At the Aug 13, 2014 AUSU council meeting, the then-Executive Director discussed her monthly report to council. I am an AU student and I was at that meeting and took notes. The ED mentioned that *The Voice* continued to be on track to meeting its benchmarks. There had been a 50% increase in site visits, additional writers had been attracted to the magazine, and content was improving.

In subsequent AUSU council meetings I have heard no further report or comment on the magazine's performance. However, because I read the magazine weekly (and have done so since 2012 as well as writing for it since late 2013) I can tell you that *The Voice* continues on an upward trajectory with regard to writers and content.

In the last six months of 2014, for example, a new study tips column, *The Study Dude*, became a regular feature; *The Travelling Student* began his ongoing tales of studying at AU while he travelled around the world; a popular series of AU student interviews, *Minds We Meet*, was launched; and a few more AU students began polishing their writing skills at *The Voice*.

The Voice continues to provide content that is directly relevant to students. A review of recent issues of *The Voice* reveals that the majority of pages are devoted to content that directly relates to AUSU, AU, and post-secondary education (despite the assertion of AUSU council that the majority of articles have "absolutely nothing to do" with these topics; one wonders what magazine they've been reading.)

In addition to the regular AUSU content page and the coverage of AUSU council meetings, recent articles in *The Voice* have promoted AUSU and its services such as lynda.com, the AUSU forums, the student planner, and AUSU scholarships, as well as encouraging students to participate in council elections and attend council meetings and the AGM.

AU and its services continue to be featured in *The Voice*, with articles on the AU library, applying for transfer credits, AU Press, course selection, AU's Study Skills series, the new AU student orientation, and the launch of AU's first MOOC. Athabasca University liked one of *The Voice*'s 2014 articles so much it reprinted the article, with permission, on its own blog page.

The Voice is focused on student-related content, which is why readers have benefited from columns and articles discussing writing skills, study-tips, exams, note-taking, e-texts, tutors, stress, procrastination, scholarships, essays, student advice, and just about any student-related topic than you can imagine. And because students aren't students all the time, *The Voice* also offers general-interest articles about current events and trends, music, slices of life, and finishes off each issue with a comic.

AUSU council should adopt a cooperative and constructive stance and work toward ensuring that *The Voice* continues to provide as much value as it can to as many students as it can. *The Voice* is the best thing that AUSU has to offer students.

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

In Conversation with Richie Mehta

Wanda Waterman



Richie Mehta is the Canadian director of Amal and Siddharth (recommended here in [The Mindful Bard](#)). Recently he took the time to answer Wanda Waterman's questions about his social conscience, his training, and his formative experiences.

What elements in your childhood and early years pointed you toward film?

It was a combination of things, really. As a young child, I just loved watching films, more so than even my avid, film-loving parents. I would absorb material related to film (*who shot this, who scored this, who was that supporting actor in that film*) before I could do my multiplication tables.

That told me something. And from that point, when I realized what a film was—that people *made* these things—I was fascinated that my emotions were being manipulated so clearly. How was this possible?

When I was 16 I went to India for the first time (being born in Canada with an Indian background). I spoke Hindi, so I could communicate. But I was so shocked by what I saw, by the fact that this world had far more pain and suffering than I knew of, and that I—by virtue of being raised in Canada—was part of the elite (which didn't sit well with me).

It was a real shock to my system, and I said I wouldn't go back to India unless I could address some of this. But it gave me perspective. It made me take advantage of every opportunity that came, both in my personal and professional life. And to this day it's reduced my ability to take anything too seriously unless it *really* warrants it (such as social, economic, and environmental issues).

Fast forward a few years. After I had studied art and filmmaking, I saw a film in 2005 called *Shooting Dogs*, about the Rwandan Genocide. I was skeptical going in, thinking it would be too melodramatic. By the end, I was a mess, crying more than I ever have. The film was so successful in making me feel and understand the tragedy that I realized that this was the power of film: to make you empathize, to make you feel compassion, and to subvert our normal apathy.

Combine these incidents, and voila, you have me making these types of films.

What was your most beneficial educational experience? What or who in your training had the most—and best—influence on you, as a filmmaker and as a human being?

This is a tough one. I've had wonderful teachers all through my life, many of whom I'm still in touch with, from high school to university to post-grad to mentors in the field. My film professors, my art teachers, my English teachers, even a science teacher I once had (who told us, *If you fail to prepare, prepare to fail.*) have all made a difference.

I will say that every time I go to India, I learn more—about myself, about humanity, about our capabilities as individuals and as a collective. It constantly reminds me of how we *can* survive in close quarters, with too little

resources for too many people. And I will say, I'm always moved at both how remarkable we are and how terrible we can be.

What was the most mesmerizing experience for you while making *Siddharth*?

The initial inspiration—meeting the rickshaw *wallah* who told me he had lost his son, a man who didn't even have a photograph, or even the ability to search for his son, as he had to work for the rest of his family. It shook me to the core, and inspired everything that came afterwards.

Did anything funny or strange happen on set?

Many things. When so many people are working towards a common goal or vision, it's amazing what can occur. You just have to be completely open to grabbing it. There's one scene where Mahendra is at a railway crossing, and walks from the bus to the crossing, only to be stopped by the passing train, before he goes off for a little walk. It all happens in one shot, with the train racing by perfectly. That was all an accident, there was never supposed to be a train passing in the scene. But it occurred, we captured it, and it was—in my estimation—magical, and related to the meaning of the film itself.

(to be continued)

*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.*

Student Sizzle AU's Hot Social Media Topics

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



AUSU Student Forums

In the General Student Chat forum, user "serenebarb" reminds students of the May 1 deadline for AUSU scholarships.

AthaU Facebook Group

Tracy is looking for input on whether to choose PHIL 252 *Critical Thinking* or PHIL 231 *Introduction to Philosophy*. Bob alerts students that IDRL 408 *Workplace Injury* will be closing soon. Carla shares her thoughts on *The Voice Magazine*, which she has recently discovered.

Other postings include Alberta elections, AUSU scholarships, course withdrawals, library website woes, APA citations, and courses ADMN 232, CMNS 401, ENGL 255, GLST 483, HIST 338, INST 430, MATH 265, and WGST 302 and 422.

Twitter

@AthabascaUSU burbled out several tweets on Apr 27: "AUSU council voted via email to approve unpaid leave for President Jason Nixon from April 21 thru May 6 - see more: <https://www.facebook.com/AthaUSU>"; "All Members are encouraged to attend the upcoming council meeting, scheduled for May 13 @ 5:30pm MST. RSVP to ausu@ausu.org for details."; and "AUSU is pleased to announce a new Executive Director! http://www.ausu.org/downloads/April_27_2015_Press_Release.pdf."

A Course Made Real

Media Ethics

Philip Kirkbride



Well, the last few weeks have been a bit of a roller-coaster for *The Voice Magazine*. I have to say it's been a real learning experience. About a month ago I started taking my mandatory ethics class, CMNS 455 Media Ethics. Little did I know *The Voice Magazine* would provide a real world example of the ethical issues that face writers, journalists, and media professionals on a daily basis.

One of the first issues I faced when writing "The Travelling Student" column was finding a balance between developing an interesting story and sticking to an objective description of the events.

Is it worth bending the truth if it makes the story more exciting? For the most part I like to stick a realistic description of the happenings. Take, for instance, last week's issue, where I go to bed early when the rest of the hostel goes out to party in downtown Sydney. There was a real temptation to tell the story as if I had went out to King's Cross and had the time of my life. As writers we face these moral dilemmas on a regular basis.

I like to stick to truth but even by omitting facts we change the way in which the story is portrayed. Writing about my trip to Quebec I never mentioned that my friend Matt broke up with his girlfriend on our way there. I felt it would have taken too long to get into the details of who his girlfriend was, why they broke up, and so on.

The issue I've come to feel most passionate about in CMNS 455 is that of free speech. For the class's first assignment I chose to write about the state of free speech in Canada. Most of us are taught as children that we all have the right to free speech. Yet it only takes a few weeks of studying the material for CMNS 455 to realize that, in Canada, free speech exists within limits. Journalist Net Hentoff is quoted in the class textbook saying that modern society allows for "...freedom of speech, or of the press--except for racist, anti-Catholic, sexist, anti-Semitic, homophobic and any other language offensive to any ethnic or religious groups."

For example, ex-news-personality, Ezra Levant, was brought before the Alberta Human Rights Commission in 2006 for printing cartoons of Muhammad. Then he was sued again in 2013, which resulted in him being found guilty of libel and forced to pay \$80,000. While Ezra Levant is far from being an 'ethical journalist' in my opinion, I have to question the effects of such law-suits. They create an atmosphere where journalists self-censor themselves, meaning that stories that may have been published instead just sit on the shelf. An effect commonly known as 'libel chill'.

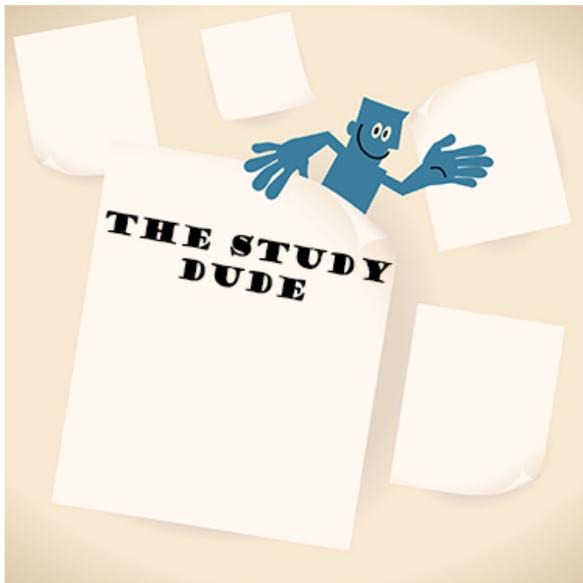
In a 2006 article of *The Lawyers Weekly*, Dan Burnett describes the state of libel law in Canada as the most oppressive in the English speaking world, "For all the lofty quotes about free speech in Canadian jurisprudence, the reality is that our libel laws are the least protective of free speech in the English-speaking world." According to Mr. Burnett, companies outside of Canada will often bring suits against non-Canadian companies in Canada because they know libel law favours the plaintiffs in Canada.

Only a week after writing my essay I was stunned to find a full issue of *The Voice Magazine* had vanished from the web. Having received an email from AUSU that the AGM had been cancelled, I quickly navigated to *The Voice* website to re-read Karl's editorial to brush up the issues at hand. To my surprise the issue was gone and the website had reverted to the previous week's issue.

As it turns out the student union claims they received a legal complaint about one of the articles. I'm told they refuse to give much detail on the claims but that didn't matter. When libel chill kicks in no chances are taken. Media articles are revoked, removed from the web, and condemned. A free society requires free flow of information, journalists who aren't afraid to ask tough questions, and to dig deep into the affairs of politicians.

I've always enjoyed writing for *The Voice Magazine*, but the past few weeks, combined with the reading from CMNS 455, have given me a real sense of pride and duty about what we're doing here.

Philip Kirkbride is an AU Student with a penchant for travelling the globe while doing his AU courses.



Study Tips from a Semi-Anonymous Friend

There is nothing more that The Study Dude wants for you than to live with integrity, concern for other's well-being, a sense of humble service to humanity—and a publication under your belt.

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 part three of Joshua Schimel's *Writing Science*, a book to make any scientific writing clear, entertaining—and fundable.

Condensing to the Bare Essentials

I enrolled in a scriptwriting class and the most essential tidbit of information I learned related to chopping out repetitive and non-essential materials. In a matter of minutes, my scene could be reduced to a quarter its original size with effective condensing strategies. The other major scriptwriting insight, for me personally, was to include language with double meanings—both of which meanings are relevant to the story—to get the audience actively considering the hidden messages.

While imposing double meanings in your writing is not *the one-and-only* optimal strategy, certainly winnowing your material to the bare essentials can add flavour.

Joshua Schimel, a quaint, animated, extraordinarily pleasant giant in the science of writing literature, whom I had the pleasure of interviewing recently, posed several strategies for condensing your writing to its finest detail:

- As proposals entail page limits, you will typically need to pare your writing down.
- Only state the bare essentials. Slice away any unnecessary words and cut out any repeats. Unnecessary words include empty adjectives and modifiers, such as adjectives or verbs that merely repeat the word that follows. For instance, I could have chopped out "merely" in the previous sentence. (*Editor's note: Whoops. I did. I'll put it back.*) Remove any obvious claims (with nothing useful to contribute) and slice out any meta-discourse.
- If your final draft contains paragraphs with a couple of words dangling at the bottom, find ways to trim them out. This will reduce the overall use of space, helping to ensure you fit the page or word count limit.
- If you have three items in a series that basically describe the same action, cut out all but one. For instance, "I will develop, test, and apply..." (p. 161) can be reduced to "I will develop".
- If a word is redundant, skip it.
- If you can find room to delete a whole sentence, but wish to retain some of the words, such as a phrase, integrate those few words with another sentence, setting it off as a dependent clause.
- Meta-discourse includes phrases such as "We conclude that..." or "It can be seen that...". These elements just puff up the discourse with empty verbal calories and should be eliminated from the writer's writing health regime.
- Whenever action arises in your writing, make sure the action is represented with a single verb, rather than a nominalization or a passive verb or verb combination. For instance, "love can be found stealthily in the weary heart" can be changed to "love usurps the weary heart."

Editing Productively

I recently watched a Udemy course with [Tom Corson-Knowles](#) wherein he argued that writers should stick with the story-writing process and leave the editing to the professionals. That way, you can manage to write prolifically—focus on your true passion—while leaving the editing drudgery to the professional editing firms.

While I'm in full agreement with him on that count, especially if the budget warrants it, editing is part of the student responsibility. Some universities may allow students to hire editors for master's and PhD thesis projects, but, by-and-large, the onus is on the student to edit their own document.

After writing a short book recently I banged my head relentlessly against the wall on how to tweak and preen it until I resigned to scrapping the entire book-writing project and starting anew. Part of the reason was that I had some brilliant insights into the writing process from these very Study Dude articles, and my quality of writing soared after reading professional books on the topic. So I'm delving into the project from a new lens. Fundamental to this improvement in my writing is this book *Writing Science* by Joshua Schimel, and *Stylish Academic Writing* by Helen Sword. I've recently had the opportunity to interview both authors for an upcoming release of a podcast on study tips I've created destined for iTunes. Now, to me, interviewing people of that calibre and grace, of that accomplishment and ingenuity, is a once-in-a-lifetime—savoured and cherished—opportunity.

The lively—on-fire—Joshua Schimel highlights a strategic process for editing your papers, proposals, and books:

- The editing process begins by addressing the bigger structural issues and evolves all the way down to the tiny details, such as words and punctuation.
- Use the SCFL model for editing, where "S" stands for "structure", "C" stands for "clarity", "F" stands for "flow", and "L" stands for "language." Each of these tend to overlap, so you will be addressing more than one in each pass of your article editing.

- Ensure your verbs sit snugly beside your nouns. The verb-noun close proximity concocts an easy read. If the subject goes on-and-on, you should narrow it down. The verb should arrive soon after the noun makes its appearance.
- Ensure that the final words of your first sentence (the stress position) are met with words that closely match or exactly repeat in the next sentence's beginning position (the topic position). [This is a rhetorical device called anadiplosis, which I will discuss in my next article.]
- If similar words are linked with an "and" condense them into one word.
- Read aloud your edited piece, as your eyes are the best quality detectors of written speech.

Sharing Your Writing

As an academic, you want to share your writing with the general public. These are the people who partially fund your education: all of you and me—the public. I once had a beautifully-spirited professor who incessantly chattered about the importance of academics getting out of the ivory tower and sharing their knowledge with the very people that comprise mainstream society. Funnily, I managed to land him a contract with the National Film Board for him to convey his research out in the field in various cultures with a national television audience. Although he was destined to be the star, the vast majority of the work would fall into my hands. However, I stood to receive little or no recognition, little or no funds, and potential abuse (not from him, I should make clear)—and it had nothing to do with my thesis topic—so, sadly, I walked away. I sometimes wonder today what might have happened if the show had been filmed and aired, and whether or not a series would have been born. Yet, in my heart, I know it was the right decision. Just don't look back. Whoever came up with that quote nailed it.

Joshua Schimel highlights the necessity of sharing our work with the public. We learn so much jargon the higher we go in academia, and I once had a professor who stated that the higher we go in academia, the less we learn. Now, she was a character: always revealing her innermost thoughts and speculations, God rest her soul. Yes, by specializing, then the higher we go, the more jargon we take in and the narrower our focus becomes, removing us from the mainstream public's reach. The more specialized we get, the more we study and examine a tiny sliver, so removed from the big issues out there—but it's all part of research, meaningful even in its minutia. Perhaps you will climb the ladder of academic success, and remember these words from Joshua Schimel when it comes time for you to share, with the public, your wisdom:

- Don't worry so much that people won't like what you write. Instead, dive into telling a story so that the public will understand. Write a simple story.
- Avoid using jargon, dense technical terms, and overly-complex explanations. Provide explanations in layman's terms so people aren't confused. Let people know how what you are describing affects them personally. The public likes to apply what they learn, so feed them application.
- Don't introduce jargon or confusing technical terms at the beginning (stress position) of your sentences. Instead, introduce them at the end, following some sort of description or definition.
- Research answers small questions, typically, but people want answers to the big questions. Provide the public with detail on how your little piece of the puzzle fits into the bigger issue, such as curing cancer.
- When confronted with what to relay to the public, consider the larger issue and the audience. If your audience is the public, answer the following: what the problem is, the "so what?" of the problem, the solution to the problem, and the benefits toward addressing the larger issue. [This strategy is modeled in Schimel's book.]

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

Schimel, Joshua. (2012). *Writing Science*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.



Music Review The Second City

Samantha Stevens



Album: *The Second City*

Artist: Shameem

It's not often that I am instantly a fan of a musician. I typically need a few songs to decide whether or not I like them, and if I decide that I do it is usually because they do something different, use elements that I like, or are inspired by something more than pop culture.

With the first note that Shameem sang, I was instantly a fan. Not only is her voice soft and sultry, but her lyrics are full of truths, experiences, and wisdom. She even shares her inspiration for

her songs on her [website](#), which I absolutely loved.

The Second City is Shameem's second album. Coming from Perth, Australia, Shameem presents her audiences with a unique perspective in her songs, with most being inspired by socially conscious messages, her Chinese-Malaysian and Iranian heritage, personal stories, and spiritual influences.

Shameem's music is an eclectic blend of sounds, typically Jazz, R&B, Gospel, Reggae, and Funk, and when combined with Shameem's angelic voice, the result is extraordinary music. Often compared to Alicia Keys and Sade, I also find that she reminds me of Esthero.

What strikes me most about this album, apart from the music, is the clever arrangement. The album is divided by an intro, interludes, and outro. This groups the songs together, however I'm not sure how they are grouped and I don't want to speculate. I just really enjoy this unusual feature not often used on albums.

Each song is guided by a powerful message, and I find it hard to pick a favourite. However, I absolutely loved "Expectation". Perhaps it is because the song defied every expectation, pun intended, that I had for this artist. The song is still very much inspired by R&B and Jazz, but there is also a Funk, Electronic, and Rock sound. Even when Shameem's singing makes the transition to a harder rock sound the transition is seamless and beautiful.

"Intro - A Lover Is He (featuring Shidan Toloui-Wallace)" is actually the tenth track on the album and features a beautiful Persian chant that absolutely melted my soul. The following song "Chill in The Fire (featuring Shidan Toloui-Wallace)" is inspired by a book written by Baha'u'llah in Farsi titled *The Seven Valleys*. Although the

song is absolutely stunning without knowing Shameem's inspiration, the story behind "Chill in The Fire" elevates the music to something more of a spiritual experience.

"Outro - Giving Thanks" finished the album off perfectly with an unpolished version of the chorus from the previous track "I Give Thanks". Once again, I think that this showcases the wonderful arrangement of the album, and the desire of Shameem and the album producer to create an album that was more than a collection of songs. This added touch makes *The Second City* a special experience and journey for the listener, more so than a passive listening experience that the average music album offers.

Overall, I absolutely loved this album because listening to the music feels more like a journey and a way to see the world through someone else's eyes, and realize that we as people all share a common heart and wish for love and peace. *The Second City* is available on iTunes, and if you find yourself in Toronto on the 9th of May, Shameem will be playing live during Canadian Music Week.

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

Click of the Wrist

Save It

Distracted by all the great articles, posts, infographics, and fascinating but time-sucking information that pop up every time you get online? If you're mired down with finals or end-of-term papers but don't want to lose track of the must-reads, check out these apps for storing, reading, and accessing it all:

Pocket

Want to save an article or post to read later? You can save it to Pocket (either through an app or via a browser plugin) and access it on your own time. From Pocket's dashboard you can read, share on social media, save to a note-taking app like Google Keep, or—really convenient when you're doing mindless tasks and need some company—have Pocket read the text out loud to you.

PushBullet

Today's digital reality means that you might come across a great article on your smart phone while you're waiting in the checkout line—but you'd rather read it at home on your laptop's bigger screen. PushBullet connects your devices with your computer, allowing you to share links directly among them. Hitting PushBullet can send an article directly to your laptop—and even open it in the browser for you.

IFTTT

Are there certain steps you always take when dealing with information? Send it to Pocket and then stick it in Google Keep with a reminder tag so you don't forget about it? Download a file from Dropbox and open it on your laptop with PushBullet? IFTTT's (If This Then That) IF function allows you to create "Recipes" that set up relationships among your devices and apps.



Love After Loss

Barb Godin



The death of my husband, following a brief fight with cancer, left me totally devastated. The overwhelming grief was extremely difficult to go through, but I knew I had no choice. To cope, I thought it might help if I fulfilled some of the dreams Ed and I had together. We had often discussed taking our grandchildren to Disney World in Florida, and I felt it might be a healing trip for us. After booking the trip, my next priority was finding someone to watch Suzie. Suzie is a little black and white Bichon/Poodle I had found on Kijiji a few weeks before Ed's death. He had encouraged me to get a puppy to keep me company after his passing. Fortunately, my neighbor, who had watched Suzie while I was staying in the hospital with Ed during his final days, was more than willing to watch her while we were in Florida.

The trip was difficult, filled with tears and sadness, but also with some good times. But I was happy to get home, and immediately went to Eleanor's to pick up Suzie. While there, Eleanor mentioned that the man on the corner had lost his wife a few days ago, and that maybe I could talk to him. I didn't recall ever seeing the man she mentioned. She went on to

describe him to me and told me that he walks a little black dog. I never gave it much thought until a few days later.

I was out in my garage when I saw the man walking a little black dog. I walked up to him and asked him if he had just lost his wife. I don't know what made me approach him, it was so unlike me, but it felt like the right thing to do. He confirmed he had, and I could see the sadness in his face, and I knew how he felt. I told him I had just lost my husband as well. He looked down, obviously not sure what to say. So I assured him things would get better and he went on his way.

During the course of the next year I saw him, Stan, four or five times. Each time we talked briefly about our missing loved ones. Since I was ahead of him in the grieving process I always assured him things would get better. He was very quiet but pleasant. I did feel drawn to him, but I thought it was due to our mutual loss.

It had been over a year, but my grief was still all consuming. I knew I needed to get involved in something, so I decided to take golfing lessons. One day while I was putting my clubs in the trunk and getting ready to go to my last lesson, Stan came walking by with his dog, Joey.

"How you doing?" he said casually.

"Going to my last golf lesson."

"You golf?"

"Well, not sure if I would say that, but I'm learning."

"We should go golfing sometime."

"Sure!"

"Okay I think I have your number, I'll give you a call next week."

*It does seem that there
were a few hands
arranging for Stan and
me to meet.*

I wasn't sure if I really wanted to go with him, but then I thought, "Well, it's only a game of golf." A few days later he called and we went golfing. I had so much fun, I briefly forgot my grief. However, the next few days were filled with confusion and guilt. How could I go out and have fun with another man! Stan called again and I reluctantly went to dinner and a movie. Ultimately we began seeing each other on a regular basis. I struggled terribly with the guilt, but Stan seemed to be handling things well. At times I pushed him away; only to draw him close again later. We both persevered through as there seemed to be an attraction between us that was difficult to ignore.

As we got to know each other we agreed the parallels in our situations seemed to be more than coincidence. We had both lived in the same unit within our condo complex, where some units are similar, but not exactly the same. This would not be that significant on its own, but when you add all the incidents together the parallels are quite unique. Stan moved into the complex six months after Ed and me. We had both viewed many homes before settling on this one. My husband passed away two and a half years after moving in and Stan's wife also passed away after living in the condo for two and a half years. We had both been attending the same Cancer Unit for treatments, but never seemed to run into each other. Then there was the fact that Eleanor had been Stan's neighbor and mentioned him to me. I call her our Angel on earth. It does seem that there were a few hands arranging for Stan and me to meet.

Ultimately, we found our way through the grief, the loss, and discovered a special love. A love we both never would have thought was possible. Two years ago, we married. We now share a deep understanding and a bond that I know will carry us through—'til death do us part.

Barbara Godin is a graduate of AU and writes the "Dear Barb" column. She lives in London, Ontario with her husband, two dogs, and one cat.

The Travelling Student Young at Heart

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 ended up buying a beat up station-wagon in Sydney, Australia.

By the time we packed everything into Matt's new station-wagon both of us were sweating profusely. It was 9:45am and already the temperature was 32C. The combination of Sydney traffic, driving on the left side of the road, and scorching temperatures made for a stressful escape. But despite the mood, passing over the

Sydney-Harbour-Bridge always feels like a picture perfect moment.

If you look closely you can sometimes see workers painting the bridge with its brown colour. Painting the bridge is a full-time job, once the bridge is completely painted it's time to start on the other side again. From the bridge you get a perfect view of the Sydney Opera House. I snapped a few quick shots of the Opera House and its surroundings of sparkling blue water.

On our way out of Sydney toward Young we stopped at BCF (Boating Camping Fishing), the go to place for camping equipment in Australia. We each purchased a massive four-man tent. By the time we got back in the car the temperature had risen to 39C. I wasn't complaining, though; winter was just starting back in Canada. It was odd to think of that while we were listening to an on air personality announce that Bondi Beach was packed.

We had the kind of energy that many Canadians get approaching the first long weekend of the summer. That moment when you realize you no longer have to worry about shoveling the driveway, pre-heating your car, and the April days when you wake up to find the ground completely covered in snow.

The drive from Sydney to Young was just over four hours. The land we drove over was mostly fields of grass, trees, and the occasional farm. Despite being the cherry capital of Australia, Young is a blip on the map. The city's population is normally around 7000, but thousands of travellers like ourselves visit Young every season to work, taste, and buy cherries.

By the time we made it to town the sun had started to go down. Matt, having been to the city before, knew of a free campsite. We pulled up to a large empty lot with a few fireplaces and tents set up. It had been a long day and, despite not having bought blankets or a sleeping bag yet, I was happy to get some sleep.



Baby Steps

Because Hilary was coming to the farm for Easter dinner I knew I could try a more daring menu than what Roy alone would tolerate. I planned the menu and bought the ingredients. When I added an elderly aunt and her bachelor son to the guest list I began to second-guess myself. What if they didn't like the two salads I was intent on serving?

I decided to stay the course. There would be stick-to-the-rib basics like roast chicken; boxed Stove Top stuffing; and a roasted medley of broccoli, cauliflower, carrots, brussel sprouts, garlic, and baby potatoes for those unwilling to try something different.

One of my new favourite dishes is caprese salad. Tomato slices, fresh mozzarella (or bocconcini), fresh basil, sea salt, cracked pepper, and a drizzle of olive oil makes my heart soar. It's quick and easy and to die for. The biggest challenge for this farm kid has been finding fresh basil but even that is getting easier when I'm in Edmonton.

Another dish I've been enjoying at restaurants like Tiramisu Bistro and Glass Monkey is a beet salad. There is something earthy and sweetly succulent about beets.

Maybe it's the *Food Network* effect but I believed I could replicate it at home. I've discovered it's also no longer essential to own a cookbook (or twenty) when the Internet exists. I googled beet salad with goat cheese and arugula and found several options. I also had to google vinaigrette to figure out how to make the dressing. The result was, in my humble opinion, restaurant worthy. You can be sure I'll be trying this salad again soon. It's *almost* secondary that my guests enjoyed it as well.

The wealth of resources for an aspiring home cook are monumental. From the Internet to 24-7 specialty channels to reality TV cooking competitions like *MasterChef Canada* have the foodie in seventh heaven. Food styling and over the top plating have created food porn and remind the conscious eater that satiety begins with the eyes.

One needs to start packing a dictionary of culinary terms when dining out just to help decipher the descriptions. Coulis, comfit, roux, aioli, adobo; our vocabularies and sophistication are growing as the world gets smaller and ethnic dishes from around the globe find their way onto menus here. When did we ditch iceberg lettuce for arugula, kale, endive, radicchio? What wine should we pair with this dish?

Reinforcing this new awareness of what we are putting into our bodies is the focus on farm to fork eating, the 100-mile diet, organic foods, and the eat local movement. Culinary tourism is hot, hot, hot. Some high-end restaurants are identifying their suppliers on their menus to show that their protein or cheese is coming from a farm and not a factory.

Bottom line: This foodie movement has empowered this woman (who really doesn't enjoy cooking) to try something different. Where might this small success lead? Not sure, but these baby steps felt good, 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

Secrets & Stereotypes

Dear Barb:

Essentially I'm making a comment rather than asking a question. A couple of friends and I rented an apartment in a building near the university and we're almost finished our first year. The building is half full of students, the rest are older people, families etc. I know everyone thinks students party all the time and make a lot of noise and destroy property. Well, that is not the case in this building. Most of the students only party on the weekends. Sure, there are a few rowdy students and the police were called a few times, but on the whole, pretty low keyed. We are trying to get an education and most of us have paid for our own schooling. I find that generally the noise in the building is coming from kids playing in the halls and couples arguing. Many evenings while I'm attempting to study, kids are running up and down the halls and knocking on doors. This is very intrusive and disruptive behaviour. As well, I don't know how many times I have had to listen to couples arguing and screaming and throwing stuff around. A few times I called the police because I feared someone was getting hurt. I just don't think it's fair that all students are being painted with the same brush, when really that's not the case at all. There, I got that off my mind!

Thanks for letting me vent. Dylan

Hi Dylan:

Thanks for sharing and you are correct, university students are labeled as partiers who are just out for a good time. There are a lot of examples of this type of behaviour occurring when a large group of students get together and there is alcohol involved. On the other hand, there are also examples of this behaviour taking place following a sports event or similar situations. I agree with you; it isn't just young people or students that carry on. Once you combine men, women, alcohol, and drugs, often a loss of control and inhibitions follow. As a rule, I believe most young people actually go to University to get an education!

Dear Barb:

A few months ago I met a fabulous guy and we began dating. He is loving, caring and has a great sense of humor. I really thought he was the one until I discovered he is married! I was at his apartment and the phone rang while he was in the shower so I answered it. The woman on the other end said, "Hi, Carrie, is Kevin there?" I said this is not Carrie and that Kevin wasn't available. I think she sensed my awkwardness and said that she would call back later. I was perplexed to say the least. When Kevin got out of the shower I told him about the phone call and asked who Carrie was. He was clearly upset, but admitted that she was his wife and that they are separated. He said he was going to tell me about it, but he couldn't find the right words. I find it disturbing that he could keep this from me for three months and that makes me wonder if he has other secrets that he's keeping. Do you think I should say goodbye to him, or give him another chance? Donna

Hi Donna:

Wow that is a big secret to keep from someone. However he does seem to have a lot of good qualities that you find desirable, so you may want to give him another chance, but be cautious. It may simply have been that he didn't know how to tell you, and feared it would scare you away. I am not in any way condoning his behaviour, as you have to do what you feel is right. Pay attention to your intuition, it usually steers you in the right direction. Good luck Donna!

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.

THE NONPARTISAN: ORGANISE

Hey Andy, the rest o' the guys workin' at the soda shop wanna organise. You gonna join?



Bobby, I don't need a union to protect my rights! If I have a problem with the boss, I just lay down the law myself!



But Andy, don't ya wanna help the other guys?

Sorry, Bobby, but if the boss sees me helping the other guys, he'll fire me!



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Athabasca University Students' Union Welcomes Newly Appointed Executive Director

Edmonton, Alberta – Athabasca University Students' Union (AUSU) is pleased to announce that **Karyna Hoch** has accepted the position of Executive Director of AUSU. She starts her new position effective today.

Karyna has been employed with AUSU since July 2009. From that time to her appointment as Executive Director, she served the AUSU Council and membership in the role of Office Coordinator. She is pleased to have maintained a current AUSU membership for the full duration of her employment with AUSU thus far. Karyna has earned a University Certificate in Human Resources with AU, and is presently working on a Bachelor of Arts. She brings to her new role an in-depth understanding of Athabasca University and AUSU, as well as a strong devotion to helping AUSU members navigate more easily in their post-secondary learning journey with AU.

We look forward to Ms. Hoch's contributions to AUSU as Executive Director, as she works alongside the Executive and council members to address and serve member needs.

For further information, please contact Shawna Wasylshyn at vpex@ausu.org

Issued on behalf of AUSU Council.

CLASSIFIEDS

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

THE VOICE

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