

THE VOICE

MAGAZINE

Vol 23 Issue 22 2015-05-29

Meeting the Minds

Interviewing Dr. Vive Kumar

AGM Survivors

A Night to Remember

Contrails on a Hot Tin Roof

Mind-Control in Modern Society

Plus:

Rachel! Rachel! Rachel!

Fake it 'Til You Make It

and much more!



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www.voicemagazine.org

500 Energy Square
10109 – 106 ST NW
Edmonton AB
T5J 3L7
800.788.9041 ext. 2905

Email
voice@voicemagazine.org

Publisher

AU Students' Union

Editor-In-Chief

Karyna Hoch

Managing Editor

Karl Low

Regular Contributors

Hazel Anaka
Christina M. Frey
Barb Godin
Barbara Lehtiniemi
S.D. Livingston
Samantha Stevens
Wanda Waterman

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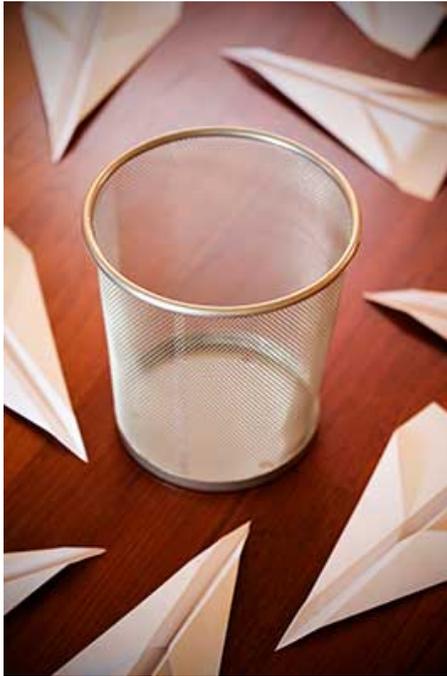
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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR



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**Karl Low****A Larger Concern**

Before you read this, you need to read Barb Lehtiniemi's coverage of the AGM, otherwise this will make absolutely no sense. So go ahead. I'll wait.

So, as you read, in this AGM, students attempted to create and pass a couple of motions that were binding upon AUSU Council. However, they were informed that, according to the Post-Secondary Learning Act of Alberta, no motion that would bind AUSU Council could be considered in order, since section 95 of the Alberta Post-Secondary Learning Act (PSLA) reads, in part:

95 (1) The business and affairs of a student organization of a public post-secondary institution must be managed by a council, the members of which are

(a) to be elected by and from the members of the student organization as provided in the bylaws made by the council under subsection (2)

It was explained that since the PSLA says that students union must be managed by a council of elected members, the law granted no authority for the students to make any motions that were binding on AUSU Council, they could only make recommendations for AUSU Council, which could then choose to follow them or not.

This interpretation of the PSLA was provided by Mr. Titus Gregory, a self-employed parliamentarian of eight years who has served as the external chair of several student unions and grad-student associations. When contacted, Mr. Gregory confirmed that he has no formal credential or accreditation, although he is a former member of the National Association of Parliamentarians. Mr. Gregory also re-iterated that, as he suggested to AUSU President Shawna Wasylyshyn, students may want to seek the advice of a lawyer to sort these issues out.

Personally, I think that's extremely good advice, since, if Mr. Gregory's interpretation of Alberta Law is correct, it essentially means that a student council could pass an elections policy saying they hold an election whenever they feel like it, and a referendums and plebiscite policy similar to that of AUSUs, which allows AUSU Council to void any petition or plebiscite they do not approve of, and not only would this be completely legal, but such a council would then be protected by law from any attempt by the students to control their own student union fees. And this doesn't just apply to AUSU, but any students' association in Alberta. So even if AU is not your primary institution, this is something that could affect you in a very bad way if left unchallenged. This is my larger concern.

Students might also consider contacting the new Adv. Ed. Minister of Alberta, and if you don't know who that is, you're in luck, as Bethany Tynes has given us an article of the recent and historic swearing in of a new government of Alberta, and a photo feature of the ceremony, where you can also see past AUSU President, Debbie Jabbour.

That, an interview with Dr. Vive Kumar, an article about how the conspiracy theorists may just be right, plus a host of other advice, reviews, and informative articles means that this issue of *The Voice Magazine* should have something for everyone.

Enjoy the read!

MEETING THE MINDS

INTERVIEWS with AU's EDUCATORS



The Voice Magazine previously interviewed Dr. Kumar in [April of 2014](#). That interview looked more at his background, while this time, Marie Well interviews him about some of his theories and accomplishments.

Marie: You have won a variety of awards and taken on some prestigious roles. What are some of your most monumental awards, positions, and acclamations?

Dr. Kumar: My very first award was a United Nations fellowship. I was working in India at the time as a Scientist. I was asked to select any university of my choice, anywhere in the world, study the technologies explored in that particular university, within a particular project, and then bring those ideas back. I chose the Learning Research and Development Center at the University of Pittsburgh, in Pittsburgh, PA, USA. The center was very popular in those days, the early 90s. They were exploring some dazzling techniques to engage students, help students at the most opportune moments, to measure trainees' skills, to predict trainee success, etcetera. During the tenure of this fellowship, I worked closely with some of the leading researchers in learning technologies, and it was a fulfilling experience for me. That experience bootstrapped where I am today. That experience switched me from

being a pure technologist to someone you can call an education-inclined technologist.

My second award was from the Asian Development Bank. While at the Simon Fraser University as an Assistant Professor, a team of us won a considerably large funding to go to Sri Lanka and assist the Open University of Sri Lanka advance its internet infrastructure as well as their educational technology infrastructure. Our team spent about three years in Sri Lanka, in Colombo and also in other ethnically affected places in the country, to deploy an infrastructure for online learning. That was a very rewarding experience to personally see the Canadian advantage in educational technology and what Canada could offer the rest of the world.

Marie: You have published a book. Please describe the scope and nature of your book publication.

Dr. Kumar: That book I now have under my belt is an edited book, with Dr. Fuhua Lin as the co-editor. It was based on contributions to the International Journal of Distance Education and Technologies. I reviewed and selected about twenty articles, sequenced them for a meaningful read, and wrote a 12 page preface for the book. It was time-consuming work. It gave me the opportunity to see the mindset of people looking into educational technology from different perspectives—culturally, technologically, and pedagogically.

Presently, I am writing a book, co-authored by Dr. Kinshuk, Dr. Maiga Chang, and Dr. Sabine Graf. titled *Learning Analytics for You*. This is a Springer book, and it is expected to be out in the market by the end of this year. This

is not just a book. This is something that would build a learning analytics community. It aims primarily at teachers to enable them integrate learning analytics solutions in their classrooms and connect with others who are also investigating analytics techniques.

Marie: You teach courses ranging from business to computer science. Please fill us in on the range of courses you have taught or designed at Athabasca.

Dr. Kumar: In computing, I have designed, developed, and taught courses at pretty much every level, 200, 300, 400, 500, and 600, including some of the high-enrolment introductory courses such as the "Introduction to Programming in Java" to technical courses such as "Computer Networks and Artificial Intelligence", to advanced courses such as "Learning Analytics, Business Intelligence, and Research Methods".

Marie: As an instructor in online education, what are some of the challenges as well as some of the highlights of teaching online?

Dr. Kumar: Let me first look at challenges. The foremost challenge as a teacher is connecting meaningfully with students. I have taught in traditional universities where, outside of the classroom, students could freely approach me, or come to my office, or set up an appointment, or have a cup of coffee and talk about things. There were so many informal opportunities for students to engage in intellectually challenging conversations, and I felt so happy doing that since it complemented the in-class experience. It also established some sort of a connection with my students: intellectually, emotionally, and even spiritually. Those are the things I miss here. Online learning should catch up to these sort of connections. We are not there yet.

You know, Athabasca offers so many ways to connect with students. Students can initiate a chat from within the online course itself and that chat message would come to the professor in the form of an email or the students can directly send emails. AU now has the student success centre as an option. Students can also connect using phones. Some students prefer to connect with me over Skype. Some prefer connecting via social media such as Facebook® or AU's own Landing. My calendar is open to my students and they are welcome to set up non-overlapping appointments for Skype meetings.

Grad students prefer real time conversation, and we typically use video conferencing tools. Seemingly we have a diverse range of tools to enrich student-teacher communications. The diversity itself is a challenge for the teacher, I should say. For example, I am very comfortable and I feel that I could do my best when I am in a synchronous communication with my students. That makes me feel confident about finding the right teachable moment. With asynchronous channels, such as email, I always have this question hanging over my head as to whether I really covered the full scope of my students' questions. I have to wait until the student responds to confirm. Those are the gaps and challenges.

Some of these channels are not really good, at least for me personally. Faculty members do have their own favourite channels of communication. That is a challenge for students taking multiple courses where they have to switch among multiple channels of communications, even those that they do not favour.

As for the highlights, one of the reasons I am here as an online teacher is that I absolutely believe this is the next generation of learning, the next leaf in the evolutionary tree of education. This is why I am putting all of my effort in learning analytics research. Until now, whatever we had done in instruction and learning has had a

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significantly big hole in our understanding of where students currently are at any given time of study, and where the student needs to be for every step of the way down the road. With analytics, we have the ability to allow students to track their own study habits, their own gaps in knowledge, and their own opportunities for learnable moments, which allows us teachers to fill in the gaps and address them right away. We don't have to wait for the assessments to come in to let us know where students need support. We can do that on a minute-by-minute basis with current technologies that can estimate their competence in each subject domain at various levels of granularity. In that sense, we are leaping into the next generation of education, and we are looking into the next generation of skill sets students need to succeed.

Regulation is something I strongly believe in. We know that students who regulate perform better. How do we bring that skill, the skill to regulate one's own study, as an integral part of a coursework? That is something we can do in an online world, quite comfortably. Online university does offer self-paced and highly contextual instruction, and offers better opportunity for pedagogical intervention. That is okay, but the most important piece is our ability to assist students to regulate their own study affairs on top of other perspectives offered by the online learning courses.

Opportunities are plenty in the online world to regulate someone's study habits, and with the upcoming learning analytics mechanisms, I think Athabasca is set up to be a leader, to show the world, how well we can cater to the intellectual needs of our students, not just at the subject matter competence but also at the metacognition-oriented soft skills. This is something I really want to push toward.

Marie: Can you please tell us a bit more about your spiritual connections with students?

Dr. Kumar: Understanding native cultures from around the world is one of my favourite quests. I use the word culture quite loosely, because to understand culture you also have to understand various interests and belief systems, including religion, community and spirituality. These are the contexts many students bring with them as they engage in conversations with me. Identifying culturally with students has reaped enormous rewards for me. My exposure to many cultures from around the world makes students feel better about talking about those issues with me, I guess. It has opened doors to understand the needs of my students that otherwise would not have been possible. It always amazes me to see how well people connect with their spiritualism and how well it motivates them to become better contributors to knowledge creation.



The Question of Honour Getting on AU's Honours List

Barbara Lehtiniemi



Will you be on AU's Honours List this year?

Every six months, AU publishes its Undergraduate Honours List. The next list is due out July 2015. Will you be on it? Here's how it works:

Who qualifies?

The short answer: Undergraduate students who are enrolled in a program, and have achieved an average GPA of 3.60 in the last 30 credits they took for their program. Of the 30 credits, at least half must be AU credits; the remainder can be transfer credits but only the

AU courses will be factored into the GPA calculation.

The long answer: According to AU's [Undergraduate Honours List Policy](#), students must meet all the following conditions to be eligible for the Honours List:

- Be enrolled in an undergraduate program.
- Have completed a minimum of 15 AU credits at the program benchmark.
- Have reached a program benchmark in their program in the six-month time periods ending June 30 or December 31.
- Have achieved a grade point average of 3.60 or higher on the AU credits earned since the previously recognized program benchmark up to the current program benchmark (e.g. 1 – 30 credits or 31 – 60 credits or 61 – 90 credits, or 91 – 120 credits.)
- Have any combination of transfer credit and a minimum of 15 AU credits that are collectively recognized towards an undergraduate credential. A "P" indicating a pass in pass/fail grade mode contributes towards credit earned but is not included in the GPA calculation.
- Not have any current penalties associated with academic or non-academic misconduct on their student record.

How do I know why my GPA is?

Students don't need to track their GPA in order to get on the Honours List. However, students who wish to monitor their own progress can download a free transcript preview, which lists the GPA of each completed AU course. To access a transcript preview, first login to your student account at [myAU](#). Then, look for "Request Transcripts" down the left-hand side, under "Manage Your Student Record". Finally, on the Transcript Request page, find the underlined word "[preview](#)" in the second paragraph. Click on "preview" to instantly download a pdf copy of your transcript (note that this preview copy cannot be used for official purposes; refer to this [article](#) from *The Voice* for helpful information on decoding an AU transcript.) You can also refer to AU's [Undergraduate Grading Policy](#) to convert an alpha grade to a numerical value, or pages 264 and 265 in the 2015 [AUSU Student Handbook and Planner](#). Either way, you'll need to do some math to calculate your average GPA for the relevant 30-credit benchmark period, unless you have only completed 30 AU credits for a program so far.

When does it happen?

At the end of each six-month period, January to June, and July to December. Qualifying students must have reached a program benchmark of 30, 60, 90, or 120 credits towards their program during the six-month period. Only the last 30 credits are considered, so students in a 4-year program of 120 credits could qualify for the honours list in four different periods. The Honours List is one of the few AU awards that doesn't rely on cumulative GPA calculations; the 30-credit benchmark periods mean that a low GPA average in one period, due to one dismal course mark for example, won't affect your ability to get on the Honours List in the next 30-credit period.

How will I know?

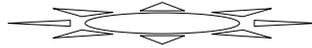
If you qualify for the honours list, AU's Office of the Registrar will notify you by letter.

Where can I see the Honours List?

The Honours List is posted six months after the qualifying period, and can be accessed from AU's [Scholarship and Award Recipients](#) page. The reason for the delay in posting is to ensure that AU has all the final grades recorded from the qualifying period, and to allow qualifying students who choose not to have their name printed on the Honours List time to notify the Office of the Registrar.

Still have questions about AU's Honour List? Refer to AU's [Undergraduate and Honours List Policy](#) and [Undergraduate Honours List Procedures](#) for more information, or contact AU's [Office of the Registrar](#). To access previous honours lists, go to AU's [Scholarship and Awards Recipients](#) webpage.

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



Fake it 'Til you Make it

Deanna Roney

I watched a TED Talks video, *Your Body Language Shapes Who You Are* by Amy Cuddy, which spoke about feeling



like you don't belong somewhere. When I started Athabasca University I did not know how I would fare. I didn't feel like I belonged, or knew what I was doing. So, for some reason this video spoke to me.

I still have not shaken the feeling of being in over my head. I still at times, feel like I don't belong here. When I start a new course and read through the assignments—I usually have no idea what they are asking. I don't know *how* I will write an essay on the subject, or otherwise complete the requirements. When this happens I, as the video says, fake it until I make it. I take one unit at a time, one

assignment, and have faith that by the time I get to each assignment I will know what to do. Each unit prepares me for the assignments and before I know it I have completed a paper on something I did not understand only weeks prior. It can be hard to learn something new, something we have no prior knowledge about, but it is also very empowering to take that leap into the unknown and see yourself grow.

I thought this feeling of being in over my head would eventually go away. I thought that after a few courses I would feel like I belong, like I know what I am doing—but I don't. I am nearing my first *Directed Studies* course, when I selected it as a "future" course I thought, "by the time I get there I will know what I am doing." It seems the joke's on me, I still don't. So I started with small steps: getting course coordinator contact information and emailing them. I had what I believed was a vague concept for study. However, when I relayed that idea to the coordination they connected me to a supervisor, who thought it was a great idea! I had managed to "fake it" until I "made it."

It is an odd concept, really, "faking it". You can't fake knowledge or interest. But, by allowing yourself the chance to put it out there, by faking confidence, you may realize you have more knowledge and interest than you thought. You may find out that you were not faking it at all. You are only psyching yourself out. As Cuddy says in the video, don't fake it until you make it, fake it until you *become* it.

Whether you are faking the confidence needed to take on a specific course or faking knowledge to complete a course, either way you are only using it as a way to move yourself forward. You have the ability to complete the assignments and create a course if you give yourself the freedom to do so: fake it until you become it.

Fake confidence until you no longer know the difference. Since watching the video that statement rings through my mind each time I am feeling like I don't belong. Each time I feel like I am in over my head. It is oddly comforting to believe I am just "faking it," it makes the risk of putting myself out there somehow lesser.

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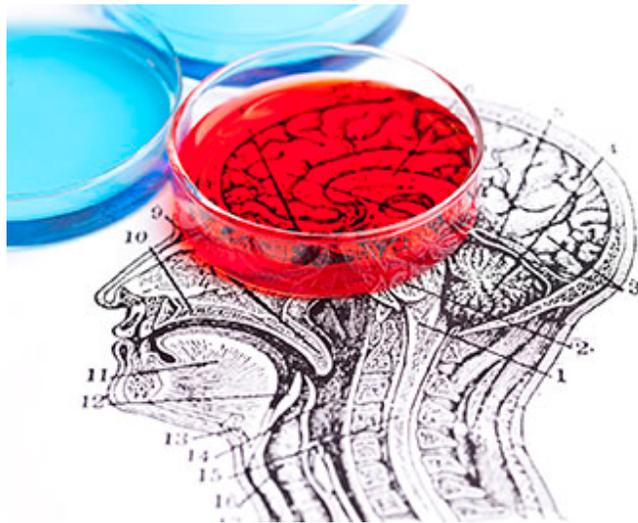
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Deanna Roney is an AU student who loves adventure in life and literature



Primal Numbers Discarded DNA

S.D. Livingston



Do you ever think about the DNA you throw away? There's actually a surprising amount of it. Stray hairs, discarded coffee cups, gum, leftovers from restaurant meals, cigarette butts, straws, Band-Aids. You might not think much about what happens to your discarded DNA, but some people do. And they're putting it to surprising, and sometimes unsettling, use.

One interesting use of discarded DNA is to shame people for littering. As this [Science Alert article](#) reports, that's the idea behind an anti-littering campaign in Hong Kong. The campaign is called Face of Litter—a fitting name, since it literally

uses the DNA on trash to create an image of the offender and "'put a face' to the anonymous crime of littering."

The company who created the advertising campaign says they got permission from the DNA donors. But people who are putting discarded DNA to other uses aren't necessarily seeking permission from its unwitting providers. And that raises some interesting questions about where, and how, your bio-debris could be used.

Take the example of New York artist Heather Dewey-Hagborg. As this [CNN video](#) shows, she's the creator of a project called Stranger Visions. Using discarded items she finds in public places, Dewey-Hagborg "takes the sample to a community biotechnology lab," extracts the DNA, and creates 3D-printed portraits of the strangers who chewed that gum or drank from that coffee cup.

The technology isn't advanced enough to create a perfect portrait. As the artist told CNN, "it's important to understand that these portraits are a general likeness. They're not exact reconstructions." The same goes for the sketches created by the anti-litter campaign in Hong Kong.

Still, the idea of using someone's discarded DNA to create public images of them, no matter how imperfect, raises some very interesting questions about privacy. Do you still own your DNA even after you've discarded it?

In Canada and the US, the law has yet to catch up with technology. Either the issue hasn't been addressed or, where it has, the law can vary widely from one jurisdiction to another. In the UK, however, it's been illegal since 2006 for "private citizens to sequence another person's DNA without permission," as the [Boston Globe notes](#).

It's a fine line, the question of whether you have any rights to something you threw away. But when it comes to DNA, the answer should be a resounding yes—for the simple reason that, unlike other objects, your DNA continues to carry unique and highly personal information about you. Everything from your ancestry to your odds of getting certain diseases. That connection, and the data it carries, doesn't end simply because you're no longer carrying a particular piece of DNA on you.

Compare it to the personal information on, say, a driver's license, or a passport. If you lose or discard it, it's simple for someone to access the data on it. They don't need a DNA lab for that. But it would almost certainly be illegal for them to use that information in any way, especially things like putting it on public display. Given the immense and very personal details buried in your DNA, any unauthorized use of it should be banned.

That doesn't mean someone shouldn't be able to build an eclectic art installation of discarded gum if that's what floats their boat. But it does mean that, outside of legitimate uses like law enforcement, no one should be able to dismantle your DNA without your permission.

So next time you're about to toss that piece of gum or half-eaten bagel away in public, think again. Your DNA trash could be someone else's treasure.

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.

Student Sizzle AU's Hot Social Media Topics

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



AUSU Student Forums

In the Business and Administration course discussion forum, user "rebkud" is looking for advice on the assignments for ACCT 451.

Other topics include the new NDP government's education funding, curling, and a shout-out from Grande Prairie.

AthaU Facebook Group

Annie wants to know the proper APA citation style for a course-related DVD. Stacy shares the surreal feeling of requesting her absolutely last exam after seven years of study. Miranda inquires into the process for requesting a re-mark for an assignment.

Other postings include converting percentage marks to letter grades, tutor-marked exercise forms, AU's alumni awards, and courses ENGL 255, HRMT 322, and NUTR 331.

Twitter

@AthabascaU tweets: "We're hiring! Check out our Facebook page for a list of the career opportunities at Athabasca University! <http://ow.ly/NsaFt>."

On May 25, @AthabascaUSU (AUSU) tweeted: "In an e-mail vote today, AUSU Council voted 3-3 in favor of a by-election. As majority vote was not achieved, the motion was defeated."

Council Connection

AGM Survivors

Barbara Lehtiniemi



It's one thing to know—just *know*—that your trusted partner is cheating on you. It's quite another to hear it from their own lips. The certain knowledge of betrayal—even though not a surprise—brings gut-wrenching dismay.

That's how I felt at the May 27 AUSU Annual General Meeting (AGM) when AUSU Council President Shawna Wasylyshyn confirmed that, while the Executive Director's position was vacant for six months, then-president of council Jason Nixon was being paid that position's salary. While students may have already suspected this, having it confirmed is still a shocker to some. Although Wasylyshyn stated that Nixon stopped receiving his council honorarium at the same time he began receiving salary for a staff position, council refused to answer questions about how much was paid to him during that period.

Drama was in abundance at Wednesday's AGM, which exceeded the four-hour mark before wrapping up at 9:47pm (MST.) The meeting had barely begun before two members requested that additional discussion items be added to the agenda, the first to address bylaw violations, and the second to address AUSU finances. The latter item turned out to be a vital addition in light of what happened next.

The agenda already had an item for annual financial statements, which is normally the point at which members can ask about financial information presented in the AUSU Annual Report. The annual report includes the previous year's financial statements, the current year's budget, and comments regarding AUSU activity in general. However, council would not permit any questions about financial activity not explicitly contained in the audited financial statements for the year ended September 30, 2014.

Members attempted to ask questions about why council pay increases were approved despite not being in the budget, and whether the former council president received any of the Executive Director's wages while that position was vacant for an extended period. Those asking questions were told firmly by Chairperson Wasylyshyn that they could not pose those questions at this time but they could bring them forward later in the meeting under the newly-added agenda item to discuss AUSU finances. Since there were few questions regarding financial activity prior to October 2014, the audited financial statements and appointment of the auditor for 2014-2015 were voted on and approved with minimal discussion.

The meeting kicked into high-drama mode with the next agenda item. Member Philip Kirkbride opened a discussion on the violation of AUSU bylaws. Kirkbride noted that there had been a number of bylaw and policy violations in the past six months. He stressed that there is no allowance for bylaw violations as bylaws are the only things ensuring that students have a voice on important matters. The penalty for bylaw violation is expulsion from the union.

Kirkbride then outlined some of the bylaw violations he felt had taken place; a summary of his comments follows:

- Bylaw 9.3.2 was violated when council made changes to the election policy on February 11 without the required 21-days notice to members.

- Bylaw 5.3.1 (b) was violated when council failed to give direct e-mail notice to its members of the AGM (both the original date of April 21 and the subsequent date of May 27.) There was also a requirement to give details of any special resolutions for the AGM to all members 21 days in advance, but only members who registered to attend the AGMs were given details on those resolutions.
- Bylaw 7.5 was violated when council interfered with *The Voice Magazine* by having the April 17 issue pulled from the magazine's website without the managing editor's consent. Under bylaw 7.5, *The Voice* operates autonomously and council may not interfere with its operations.
- There are no provisions in AUSU's bylaws to cancel an AGM and the April 21 AGM should not have been cancelled. There are provisions in the bylaws on how to proceed in the absence of council members; the Apr 21 meeting should have gone forward.

Each item was discussed as it was brought forward. In most cases, the council members who spoke pled ignorance of the bylaws, or felt that their actions were justified in spite of the bylaws. Kirkbride concluded by making a motion to expel those AUSU members chiefly responsible for the bylaw violations, namely Shawna Wasylyshyn, Corrina Green, and Jason Nixon.

After the motion was seconded, non-member Titus Gregory advised that the motion was not allowable under Alberta laws. Gregory, who was introduced at the beginning of the meeting as an advisor to council on parliamentary procedure, advised that only a non-binding resolution could be made. After much discussion, such a motion was proposed. Council members then asked for the motion to be separate for each member named, and further that each of the subsequent three motions list all the bylaws each of the members were said to have violated.

Kirkbride concluded by making a motion to expel those AUSU members chiefly responsible for the bylaw violations ... Non-member Titus Gregory advised that the motion was not allowable under Alberta Laws

The meeting had gone on for close to three hours by this point. In the delay while Kirkbride gathered information to provide the necessary information as requested, one council member who did not identify herself before speaking, unleashed a tirade against Kirkbride for the delay, accusing him of being disrespectful and unprepared. Despite this distraction, the motions were finally presented with the requested changes and they were then put to a secret e-mail ballot. All three motions passed.

The next agenda item was a discussion of AUSU's finances. Member Sheldon Fougere opened the discussion by saying that students have expressed concern over wages and expenses at AUSU. Members present at the meeting asked questions of council regarding the recent pay increases for the council executive, but did not seem satisfied with the answers as to why the increases were approved and why they were not budgeted for. Council was also asked if former AUSU council president Jason Nixon was paid any of the salary of the Executive Director's (ED) position. Council President Shawna Wasylyshyn confirmed that Mr Nixon received the ED salary during the period when there was no ED on staff but that he ceased receiving his council honorarium. Council was asked how much money was paid to Mr Nixon during that period; council declined to answer.

Following this discussion, Fougere proposed a motion that AUSU engage an audit firm to conduct a forensic audit to determine if AUSU funds were managed according to AUSU bylaws and Alberta laws. The motion was declared to be out of order after council's advisor Mr. Gregory advised that the membership could not direct council to undertake such an audit. The motion was amended to be a recommendation to council and after discussion was passed with only one vote in opposition.

The next two agenda items were recommendations to approve changes to Policy 3.04 and section 4.5 in AUSU's bylaws. After a discussion between meeting chair Shawna Wasylyshyn and advisor Mr Gregory, both motions were declared out of order and removed from the table. The reason given was that both motions require all members to be given proper notice of the proposed changes and such notice had not occurred.

As the meeting neared the four hour mark, only two agenda items remained, with one of them being what must have been for most the much-desired adjournment. While it was close to 9:30 pm MST, students in other time zones were struggling to keep awake. When it was discovered that no report had been prepared for the penultimate agenda item, the presentation of the AUSU Annual Activity Report, councillors improvised with a review of projects underway at AUSU, including the previously announced mobile app, a proposed mental health plan, and upgrades to the website.

At 9:47 pm the meeting was adjourned, making it the longest AUSU AGM in memory. In Ontario, where I live, it was almost midnight. In addition to the six AUSU councillors present, there were eight other AUSU members; I believe all 14 hung in there until the adjournment was called, making them AGM survivors.

For Sheldon Fougere, an AU student living in Eastern Canada, the meeting ended at 12:47 am. Asked the following day why he had put forward the motion for a forensic audit, Sheldon said, "I put the motion forward in an effort to provide a fair and equitable way for all involved to get the information that was being asked for in a variety of ways. An independent third party seemed to be the best route. I was glad to hear that the President and Vice President - Finance and Administration would welcome such a process."

Five time zones to the west, AU student Philip Kirkbride phoned in from Alaska to attend Wednesday's meeting. Contacted the following day about his motion—which turned into three motions—Kirkbride said, "I felt that students needed to hold council accountable for breaking bylaws. While council is an important role in itself it's also training grounds for potential provincial and federal politicians. My biggest fear is that someone who abused the system would go on to do the same thing at a higher level of government."

It's not clear what the next steps are for the resolution arising from Mr Fougere's motion recommending a forensic audit. Similarly, the resolution stemming from Mr Kirkbride's motions that AUSU recognize that three members of AUSU violated bylaws has an uncertain future. Although AUSU bylaw 4.6.1 states that membership shall cease upon a failure to comply with the bylaws, that clearly hasn't happened (does this in itself create a bylaw violation? Just asking.)

The AUSU Annual General Meeting is over, but it appears that the AUSU drama may not be. Stay tuned.

Writer's Toolbox

A Company Affair, Part I

Christina M. Frey



What's in a name?

No, it's not a rhetorical question—and it touches on something vital that writers need to remember when talking about companies, brands, and organizations.

Corporate logos, business names, products, and brand taglines may look or sound simple, but they often have a complex history. In fact, frequently they represent huge investments of time, energy, and brainpower and are considered every bit as important to a company as, say, its bank account or main manufacturing plant. That's why it's so important to get it right when using these names in your writing.

A rose by any other name...

When referring to a company or a company-owned product name or brand in your writing, you no longer—in most settings—need to include the ® or ™ symbols to show ownership. But as a general

rule, you should use the spelling and punctuation of the original—even if there are small spelling or punctuation eccentricities.

Don't add anything, either (like italics or quotation marks), unless the original and/or the treatment in the text specifically require that.

Example A: I read *mental_floss* on my iPad. Here, iPad does indeed have an internal capital, and *mental_floss* is lowercased and has the underscore in between the two words, just like the original. Note that *mental_floss* is italicized here only because it's a magazine name.

Example B: I'm heading over to the 7-Eleven. Here, you do mix the numeral and the written-out number, because that's how the company does it—style guides be damned.

Note that I referred to a general rule. Most professional editors agree that you don't need to go too far in reproducing unusual or difficult symbols, like the backward *R* in Toys"R"Us. In fact, TRU's own website indicates that Toys"R"Us is itself a registered name, and the company uses it in their own marketing copy.

There's another consideration. As this *Economist* [article](#) points out, some company names, like those which involve an exclamation point (e.g., Yahoo!), are created to "arrest the eye"—and some journalists prefer to keep their writing free of what could be seen as corporate preferentialism.

There's no easy answer on this other than to be consistent. If you're dropping exclamation points, do it across the board—and leave in the internal capitals if taking them out will be distracting (and it usually will be). And if a company specifically requests that writers refer to their name or product in a certain way, follow that if you can.

Where to look

The easiest source is the owner of the company name, logo, or trademark. Check out their corporate headquarters website, particularly the pages detailing the company's history (you might even find that the name has changed over time, which is helpful if you're writing about a non-current time period). They may also have media kits readily available, and you can always call corporate headquarters in a pinch.

And never assume; don't cut corners. The consumer web page or even the logo may be spelled differently than the company's preferred name or usage for text references. Walmart's signs may be visible across the country as Wal-Mart, but corporate communications indicate that in writing the corporation is to be referred to as Walmart.

In the coming weeks we'll cover some of the more difficult questions of use: what happens when you need to make brand or company names into plural or possessive form, how to start sentences with lowercased brand names, what to do about genericized brand names (like Kleenex vs. tissue), and when and how you can abbreviate names. We'll even touch on using trademarked names in fiction (and when you should just make up an equivalent brand instead).

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](#).



Contrails on a Hot Tin Roof

Jason Sullivan

During a pause at my forestry job I gazed skyward and spied a jet with a pluming white contrail flowing out behind it. Against the deep azure backdrop, it had a transcendental quality. This made me think of a fellow I knew who was convinced that planes sprayed mind-control substances into the atmosphere whenever they flew overhead. He believed these contrails to be so capable of overwhelming mental defences that he took the initiative to have his house roofed in tin. A tin roof would protect his children from the harmful rays (or beams or particles or whatever they were). My sociology self remembered W. I Thomas' famous injunction that "if men define situations as real, they are real in their consequences" (Thomas, online). Outlandish as his beliefs were, this fellow was acting in concrete ways as though sinister brainwash was an imminent possibility. Was he totally out to lunch or did his hills have some eyes of truth after all?



If I met Mr. Tin Roof now I'd try and have a conversation about his beliefs. I think of Blaise Pascal who wrote that "people are generally persuaded more by reasons which they have themselves discovered than by those which have come into the mind of others" (Pascal, online). Our ideas may be under attack from without, but, tin roof or

not, we do possess thoughts of our own. And these thoughts are underpinned by a desire for a respectful audience; self esteem is, after all, a socially-produced condition. Fruitful discourse with a conspiracy-theorist, then, must bear in mind that "we need to be able to see something in others that we can identify with, so as not

to be confronted by something completely alien, which will define us (always) by this relationship rather than by ourselves." (Wallace, 2011, online). When we find commonalities with others a healthy dialogue ensues.

And so it was in that brief work break that I figured that I must have something in common with this crackpot-seeming fellow who I'd written off during the time of our acquaintance. At the very least we both had experienced fascination and awe at the sight of plane contrails. It occurred to me that my first-year sociology definition of society was that society is external and coercive to our selves. Media, friends, teachers, family, even our interpretations of our own 'nature', all are external things that go into making us who we are. In this sense we swim in a soup of mind-control; one not created by sinister lizard people to be sure, but one that is external and coercive nonetheless.

Noam Chomsky and Edward Herman trenchantly summarize actually-existing mind-control in our society in their book and documentary titled 'Manufacturing Consent'. They show that the history of modern media is a history of attempts to control thoughts and ideas to sell consumer products and political ideologies. Some truths are held to be self-evident; these are "what William Evan calls 'normative reference organizations,' whose requirements and demands the media must accommodate if they are to succeed" (Chomsky and Herman, online). The absence of mind-control waves seems obvious, but in many cases 'truth' is a far more ambiguous entity.

Mass media suggests interpretations of the world and, as this guidance accumulates in our minds, we start to believe them. Who can forget the run-up to the 2003 Iraq war when news report after news report cried out about 'Weapons of Mass Destruction' which turned out to be non-existent. That there was so little mass media opposition to this dominant narrative was no accident; certain viewpoints were accepted and certain others were not. Yet internet users readily discovered smaller media websites which stated that there were probably no weapons. These viewpoints were cast aside by the mass media apparatus, however. It was all very Orwellian; all opinions were equal but some were more equal (which is to say acceptable) than the others.

Chomsky and Herman note the elaborate system in place to repress and punish outlier perspectives. In the first place an opinion extraneous to the established hegemonic discourse is automatically downgraded in the mind of listeners by well-placed responses which have been drummed into their (our!) heads. Chomsky and his cohort Herman state that when it comes to the news, and by extension social opinion in general, "the raw material of news must pass through successive filters, leaving only the cleansed residue fit to print. They fix the premises of discourse and interpretation, and the definition of what is newsworthy in the first place, and they explain the basis and operations of what amount to propaganda campaigns." (Chomsky and Herman, online). Even if lizard aliens and brainwash space programs existed, we'd generally not hear about them. To use Chomsky's term, too much "flak" would be received by anyone who tried to divulge the truth (Chomsky and Herman, online).

Valid discourse with my tin roofed acquaintance would have to begin by accepting that there exists a kernel of truth within his sense of being externally and coercively affected by the outside world. One might recall that, contending with what seemed like metaphysical mumbo-jumbo and confusion, Karl Marx stated that "with Hegel, the dialectic is standing on its head. It must be turned right side up again, if you would discover the rational kernel within the mystical shell." (Marx, online). Conspiracy theorists may be akin to philosophers who have fallen into a smoky metaphysical haze out of which some useful truth may yet emerge.

The 'rational kernel' of confusion and paranoia in the face of a hostile, tentacled, world appears all around us. Everywhere we are assailed by external and coercive ideas. Advertising slyly uses sex to convince us to buy items against our better judgement; if a lascivious model holds a household appliance in the right way we may

think we need a new vacuum cleaner. Films project social roles and value judgements which cause us to repress aspects of our authentic selves; men reared on action movies sometimes come to believe that masculinity involves violence. Finally, at the level of thought itself, emotional discontent and existential anguish are, in our society, often reduced to pathologies. There is a pill for every rational disagreement with the dominant norms and values society. Folks who are maladjusted are less often institutionalized but more often prescribed psychotropic drugs to deal with, say, depression arising from a soul-crushing workplace.

In a sense we inhabit a world chalk-full of things that seek to control our hearts and minds. This world of propaganda is explicated by sociology, psychology, philosophy, and anthropology. There are broad, wonderful swathes of education devoted to uncovering the rational and irrational underpinnings of social and mental life. Athabasca University is a great way to access these academic disciplines, no matter one's age, lifestyle or location. If, in my life travels, I encounter Mr. Tin Roof again, I will be better able to engage in meaningful discourse with him.

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Jason Hazel-rah Sullivan is a Masters of Integrated Studies student who loves engaging in discourse while working in the sunny orchards and forests of the Okanagan.



Study Tips from a Semi-Anonymous Friend

Debate Your Way to a Win-Win Situation!

There is nothing more that The Study Dude wants for you than to learn how to argue with subtlety and tact.

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 article examines the book *Thank You for Arguing: What Aristotle, Lincoln, and Homer Simpson Can Teach Us About the Art of Persuasion*. At the outset, this book's learning curve surmounts any others for people who use loud tones, threats, or name-calling to get their way. True

argumentation's subtleties and niceties will open a brand new world for those cunningly wanting to get their way, artfully.

Label and Frame Away

When I finished an undergraduate degree in Communications Studies, it behoved me to grasp this concept called "framing", so touted in the discipline. Framing sneakily occurs in advertising, where drinking beer somehow equates to women fawning over you, head over heels in love. The reality speaks more to a big beer gut, loud belches, and inaccessibility during football season—big turnoffs for most women, in other words. Framing also makes the bar scene appear as the ideal place to find a relationship. The reality speaks more to a one-night stand, multiple partners, and creepy Pete knocking at your door. Yet, advertising makes this shallow world somehow claim substance and allure.

So, if a bar filled with potted bellies and addicts strikes you as appealing, how can you use the art of framing to advance your own—and not Coor's—interests? Jay Heinrich provides ample strategies for labelling and framing.

- When dealing with labelling, don't just mindlessly follow along with your opponent's definition, reframe them to fit your own purpose. If your opponent says that you are a wicked slanderer, then say that if being a wicked slanderer entails bringing the truth to the otherwise misinformed public in the form of leading edge news, then you agree with his definition.
- If your opponent says something about you or your actions that appears almost favourable, use that leverage point to attack him or her. If your opponent says that you are a humble yet aggressive agitator, you can pounce on the word "humble", saying that you sometimes defy your humble nature to speak out against the atrocities committed by people such as your opponent.
- When framing, determine what are referred to as the audience's "commonplaces", or general assumptions or underlying beliefs of the audience, weed out the commonplaces that favour you or your position, and start with that in your argument. Then move on to the broadest issue you can think of that pertains to your commonplace. Next, try to make your argument based upon future choice, as choice (versus blame or moral judgement) delights an audience. For instance, if the audience yields a majority of environmentalists, and you are an energy company representative, start off by discussing the value of environmentalism. Move on to give it a broader framework, wherein environmentalism in energy production marks the new era. Then continue on to suggest that the audience has choice in environmental options for extracting crude energy oil. No argument must product a black or white outcome; sometimes you get your way in the middle.

Fallacious Thinking Can Take You—Smack!—In the Midst of a Winning Debate

Once, when I took logic and mathematics courses, I engaged a conversation with this rigid fellow. After every comment I made, he pointed out the logical fallacy I breached. I could have said nothing, just sighed, and he would have found some remote fallacy to describe my insolent behaviour. Even though avoiding this fellow surely amounted to the best strategy, I secretly wished I too could master all the logical fallacies, pointing them out bitterly whenever someone committed one, or, more realistically, whenever I didn't get my way.

However, reading Jay Heinrich's book illuminated the truth that logical fallacies are awesome in conversation. You can't commit an error with fallacies if they advance your interests. Fallacies only prove loathsome when dealing with formal logic; in arguing, fallacies shine like gold dust, sprayed in the opponent's eyes. Jay Heinrich provides guidelines for the logical fallacies, and then straight out recommends you use them to your advantage:

- Fallacies commit three crimes of logic: (1) they consist of poor proofs, (2) they implicate an incorrect number of choices, and (3) the proof doesn't naturally lead to the conclusion.
- Venn diagrams (those beautiful overlapping circles in statistics and math) can frame fallacies. If you say one thing is another when the first thing's representative Venn diagram is only partially in the second's Venn diagram, then there is a disconnect. For instance, if you said killers are all communists, and some killers are in actuality capitalists, then--voila!--you've committed a fallacy.
- Logicians condemn fallacies, but rhetoricians, debaters, and everyday arguers, love fallacies unless the fallacy leads to a battle or distracts from the underlying argument.
- Fallacies sometimes appeal to common sense and emotion. As a matter of fact, pathos (emotion) and ethos (trust) appeal to people more than logos (logic) does.

Foul Play in Argumentation

Growing up, my older brother tormented me. Even as an adult, he tormented me. His style of argumentation committed every foul for debate and argumentation conceivable. Fortunately, he claimed a hefty director role with a global company, making a disgusting six or seven figure salary. With his rise to power, he groomed himself for more effective means of argumentation and communication, and he no longer tormented me. Instead, we now help each other's goals and objectives, namely with writing and graphic design. You see, we both love to communicate to the public, and his strength in writing complements my strength in graphic design, and my strength in writing complements his editing skills (for smaller projects).

But does it make sense that argumentation should have fouls when fallacious thinking is acceptable? Certainly. It's okay to dupe others in argumentation with the occasional breach of logic, but an outright lowball insult spans a completely different terrain altogether. Jay Heinrich spells out the fouls that you never want to make when arguing:

- Always try to make your arguments above board, without ever attacking your opponent through humiliation or insults. When the emphasis resides on humiliation, the argument precludes choice, and choice is the essence of the best argumentation.
- Try to keep your tenses focused on the future, providing some sort of future choice. Switching your tense from future choice to present moral judgement or past blame can be considered foul play in debate and argumentation.
- Try to stay open to opposing point of views. In other words, if you close your mind to another, oftentimes opposing, perspective, this marks a foul in debate.
- Don't try to convince people to take the action you want through threats of violence of other negativities. Threats equal foul play in debate.
- Try to veer clear of profanity or crude signs, such as hoisting the middle finger. These offensive words and actions mark yet another foul in debate.
- Avoid using innuendo, such as saying, "My opponent truly does not uphold dictatorial agendas" when you are simply trying to put the association of dictatorship and your opponent into your audience's mindset. Such innuendo, a strategy for some politicians, is a no go for debate and argumentation.

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.

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The Mindful Bard

Leviathan

Wanda Waterman

You Can't Pull in Leviathan With a Hook,
But He May End Up Beached on Your Shore



Film: *Leviathan*

Director: Andrey Zvyagintsev,

Writers: by Zvyagintsev and Oleg Negin

"In this work at all times, the human spirit is shown as modified by its relation to force, as swept away, blinded, by the very force it imagined it could handle, as deformed by the weight of the force it submits to."

- Simone Weil, "The Iliad, or The Poem of Force"

"You are covered by the divine being, you can do whatever you want, enjoy . . . Not only the explicit message: renounce, suffer and so on... but the true hidden message: pretend to renounce and you can get it all."

- Slavoj Zizek, *Pervert's Guide to Ideology*

Kolya is a mechanic living in a northern Russian fishing village, on the same property as generations of his ancestors. We meet him in the midst of one of the most challenging of combats: that of

wresting his land (or at least getting a fair price for it) from the grimy hands of a public official.

Kolya has been referred to as a modern-day Job, but he's closer to a demonic parody of the Biblical figure; he isn't righteous, great, or rich—hardly the faithful servant of whom God might brag to Satan.

Kolya is just a wee bit too ordinary to excite our sympathy. We wish he would just dodge the massive steamroller of injustice coming his way, but instead he puts his shoulder against it and, naturally, fails—rendering him a tragic hero.

It's easier to feel sympathy for Kolya's son Roma, pitifully ill equipped to cope with the moral degradation of his environment. Or for his second wife, the pretty Lilya, who tries to fulfill her duties as a housewife and stepmother in spite of feeling utterly miserable.

But Kolya's role in the story is not to excite our sympathy. He's actually there to showcase a peculiar set of social conditions, conditions that challenge the human expectation that good will win out in the end.

Let's reflect on those conditions for a moment. What happens when you remove church and free enterprise from a nation at the same time? You end up with communism, obviously. But what happens when you bring church and free enterprise *back* to that nation at the same time?

It's like when you let two wild dogs out of the cage at once. Dogs are social animals that have evolved the ability to work together for their mutual benefit. This means that when they work in pairs or groups they're capable of competing as hunters with the far superior cat family.

One of the dogs hunting Kolya down is Vadim, a weak but psychopathic mayor with shady business interests (a portrait of an approving Putin hangs above his desk). He wants Kolya's sea-front land in a big way, and he wants it cheap. His partnership with the church grants him an aura of respectability in the community, and it looks like the church, for its part, encourages the people to vote for him.

The other dog is of course the Orthodox Church itself, its partnership with Vadim granting its clerics lives of luxurious idleness that the parishioners can only dream of. The priests will do anything to hang on to the perks, even if it means betraying their own sacred offices.

All Kolya has on his side is the wise, dignified Dimitri, his lawyer friend from Moscow, who starts off looking quite capable but who in the end succumbs to the same moral weakness that afflicts everyone in the film.

The moral weakness is carefully guarded. There is much silencing in the story, and in two separate scenes two different characters adjure someone not to confess to them. On the wall of an abandoned church, where reprobates gather to drink, smoke, and mock the world, is a faded painting of Salome being presented with John the Baptist's head, a terrible reminder of how prophetic utterance has been silenced and cut off from this world, to great loss.

The film deals heavily in universals, and the cinematography expresses this beautifully. If you've ever been to a northern fishing village you'll recognise this town; the foaming waves smashing against the grey loins of rock, the stormy sky, the wrecks of abandoned fishing boats, the moss, and the weathered buildings practically deliver the smell of rotting fish entrails and lashings of angst.

The massive skeleton of a beached whale is a central symbol in the film, representing the Biblical leviathan God mentions to Job. When the priest recounts the story of Job (which he gets so wrong that it sounds like he's making it up as he goes along) it is to deny Kolya's right to question God's will, suggesting to Kolya that if he simply accepts his fate (that is to say the will of the church), good things will also come to him as they did to Job.

Yeah, right.

This'll make you smile: even though this film has been lauded by critics the world over, making it a huge feather in the cap of Russian arts, the Russian minister of culture, responsible for providing thirty-five percent of the funding for the film, dismissed it for being a negative portrayal and accused the director of being too enamoured of accolades to be capable of portraying "real" Russians. The minister is now proposing guidelines to prevent this kind of film being made in Russia again.

Leviathan manifests six of the Mindful Bard's criteria for films well worth seeing.

- It's authentic, original, and delightful.
- It poses and admirably responds to questions that have a direct bearing on my view of existence.
- It stimulates my mind.
- It inspires an awareness of the sanctity of creation.
- It displays an engagement with and compassionate response to suffering.
- It makes me appreciate that life is a complex and rare phenomena, making living a unique opportunity.

Wanda also writes the blog *The Mindful Bard: [The Care and Feeding of the Creative Self](#)*.

Rachel! Rachel! Rachel!

Bethany Tynes

"A chapter in the story of Alberta" – and its universities?



The lawns, the sidewalks, the wading pools, even the trees on the Alberta Legislature Grounds were filled with people. Sunday, May 24th, 2015 marked the first change of government in Alberta in forty-four years, and the public turned out in droves to witness the first government swearing-in ceremony to which they had been very deliberately invited.

The ceremony took place on the main steps of the legislature. One sheriff, providing security support on the west side of the grounds, estimated that there were "about twenty thousand people" on site, adding that he and his colleagues had been "told to plan for between seventeen and twenty-five thousand people to attend."

Chief Justice Catherine Fraser administered the oath of office to newly elected premier Rachel Notley, leader of Alberta's New Democratic Party. Even Fraser seemed excited by the mood at the Legislature, and paused between Notley's swearing-in and the introduction of cabinet

members to say "this isn't in the script, but you can now congratulate her, she's officially Premier!" The crowd cheered loudly.

Notley announced a cabinet of just twelve ministers, including herself, a contrast to predecessor Jim Prentice's cabinet of twenty. "We have an efficient and lean cabinet to get down to work and to deliver results," she said. "This is a cabinet built to work and to get the job done." Given that the NDP pledged additional funding and support for post-secondary institutions and students in their election platform, some of the new cabinet's work can be expected to be in the area of Advanced Education.

Lori Sigurdson, MLA for Edmonton-Riverview, was announced by Notley as Minister of Innovation and Advanced Education. In this role, she will be responsible for the department that "supports accessible, affordable and quality advanced learning opportunities for all Albertans" and "funds public post-secondary institutions in Alberta" (as well as devising the formula by which individual institutions receive funding).

Sigurdson's biography on the Government of Alberta website indicates that she completed a Bachelor of Arts at the University of Alberta, as well as a Bachelor and Master of Social Work at the University of Calgary. She has served as an instructor at the University of Calgary, MacEwan University, and Norquest College. Sigurdson will also serve as the Minister of Jobs, Skills, Training and Labour.

After Sigurdson and her colleagues undertook their respective oaths of office, Fraser invited Notley to bring remarks. The crowd chanted "Rachel! Rachel! Rachel!" over and over again. "Welcome to the first day of Alberta's new government," Notley said. "Today we open a new chapter in the story of Alberta."

Notley's remarks highlighted some of the "great things" that have already been accomplished through the determination of Albertans, including the development of "universities and colleges that attract the

brightest minds and help our students reach their fullest potential." Notley said she is "filled with a deep sense of confidence in what that future will bring" and humbled by voters' trust and "by our amazing potential."

At the close of the ceremony, Notley led her cabinet and caucus down the Legislature steps "to meet those in attendance." The crowd surged forward as supporters both young and old sought to shake her hand, congratulate her, and pose for photographs. Certainly the attendees present joined Notley in her belief that "it is springtime in Alberta, and a fresh wind is blowing."

Bethany Tynes completed her MA in Integrated Studies through AU, and is a Canadian politics junkie.

Click of the Wrist

Playing Dress-up

Think dressing up in superhero costumes is just for kids? Think again. With convention season winding down, adult costumers, known as cosplayers, are highlighting the year's best—and starting to plan their transformations for the cons they'll be attending this fall. This week's links give a glimpse into the fascinating art of the world of cosplay.

Spotlight

From Pop Culture Uncovered, this series of interviews highlights the women and men of cosplay—both amateurs and professionals—people who are committed to translating characters from the page or screen to real life.

Amber Unmasked

For a deeper glimpse into a cosplayer's world, check out this site, run by cosplayer and model Amber Love, and its fascinating array of photos, event recaps, makeup and costuming tutorials, and podcasts. Note: some of Amber's modeling shots are NSFW.

The Lighter Side

For a Cracked-style take on cosplay, you might enjoy Dorkly's slideshows, which range from cosplaying animals to cardboard armor battles to costumes that apparently "can actually help you fight crime."



Photo Feature

Bethany Tynes



Thousands of people, including many AU faculty members, gathered to witness the first changing of government in 44 years



MLA (and former AUSU president) Debbie Jabbour and Premier Rachel Notley observe the swearing-in ceremony



Rachel Notley sworn in by Chief Justice Catherine Fraser



Premier Rachel Notley congratulates Lori Sigurdson, new Minister of Innovation and Advanced Education, the Minister responsible for the well-being of Athabasca University.



Notley led her cabinet and MLAs into the midst of the crowd, where supporters crowded in to shake her hand and have their picture taken.



Notley met supporters and took the time to listen to and thank ceremony attendees individually.

Music Review

Lipstick Debut Album [Special Edition]

Samantha Stevens



Album: *Lipstick Debut Album [Special Edition]*

Band: [Lipstick](#)

It is rare to find a band that is fun, entertaining, unique, and true to its origins, but with the added bonus of playing face melting rock music. Like a legendary creature finally emerging from its egg after a hundred years, the raw sound of Lipstick will leave you in awe with a sense of great and wondrous things to come.

Formed in Nashville, Lipstick's four band members are wonderfully quirky. In fact, each member of the band has a great back story that can be found on their [website](#), including the introduction and bio of the band's mascot Mr. Cool. You can also find the band's allies, enemies, and a dynamic story (used to provide subtle updates about the band), an element of the band that I absolutely love. Unfortunately, the story hasn't been updated in a couple of years, so I am hoping that it is something the band intends to work on in the future.

Lipstick Debut Album [Special Edition] is the special edition of the band's debut album released last year, and this edition includes four bonus tracks and deluxe packaging. Overall, the sound is very raw, like a raw gem before it's been polished. The music is solid with the typical glam-rock drums, bass, and guitar, but the vocals could use a bit more refinement. Although the vocals are not bad, they just tend to sound more like a teenage garage band than a rock band. But despite that, I really enjoyed the album. The songs are fun, creative, and they are full of laughter and upbeat themes.

Although glam rock is a touch too light for my tastes, the band holds true to the glam sound of the 70s and 80s. Lipstick's sound reminds me of Meatloaf, Guns & Roses, and The Darkness all rolled into one.

The opening track "We're Here to Rock You" starts off with the heavy rock music, which I absolutely loved. However, I did notice that at times the vocals failed to harmonize, and sometimes you could even hear the two distinct voices, which is very distracting.

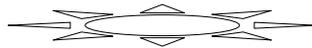
"I Like the Way I Rock" instantly made me think of the SNL skit where Christopher Walken demands more cowbell! Whether or not that was intentionally done, I absolutely loved this song. The vocals are much tighter, the lyrics are full of confidence, and the sound is loud and gritty. "I Like the Way I Rock" is a perfect rock song!

If you are having a bad day, or just need a touch of encouragement, "Alone" will give you the support you need. That typical glam sound is accompanied by uplifting lyrics that I find heartening, to the point that, on the days I don't feel like I can tackle my day, this song gets me moving.

I could easily go on about every song on this album, especially tracks like “The Conan Song”, “Merle”, and “Tonight” which all showcase the best of the band member’s talents. But the last song that I want to draw attention to is one of the four bonus tracks “Illium”. The music is lighthearted, and the lyrics are delightfully whimsical. Full of science fiction and fantasy references, combined with high school woes, I found this song to be absolutely addictive and is guaranteed to put a smile on your face.

Lipstick Debut Album [Special Edition] is a wonderful tribute to the glam rock bands of old and is worth checking out. The special edition album is available on June 3rd, but the original edition is now available on their [website](#) for purchase.

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



The Fit Student

Zero in on that One Thing

Marie Well



Studying demands we zone in on our priorities, whether that is getting A's or living as the best parental model possible. With so many distractions in everyday living, our key priorities are often sidetracked, yielding a less than optimal outcome. And what about those New Year's Resolutions we made this past January? How many resolutions, if any, do we make that come to fruition? What is the secret to making our key goals and priorities realities? Gary Keller, in his book, *The One Thing*, reveals some outstanding insights in how to zero in on that one thing.

But, first, I must provide a little disclaimer. This book came purchased for me by a kindly stranger. Noting my fascination with the book, he surprised me and my partner with a fully paid copy. Serendipity led me to this content, which I now reveal to you, topped off with ample karma from a benevolent gentleperson.

Form Positive Habits

Habits breathe life into goal accomplishments. If I could slot my every task into a timeframe, and repeat it day in and day out, I would revel in such a system. My personality loves deadlines, detailed schedules, and mapped out events well in advance. But, some habits you need to birth, especially habits that will lead you to the frontline at the Olympics running track or to an Honour's award at Athabasca University.

Keller offers sure-fire advice on how to make a habit commonplace. For one, he exhorts that a habit takes sixty-six days on average to cement. Plus, even more interestingly, one positive habit can cause a chain reaction of multiple other negative habits diminishing, such as stressing, substance abuse, caffeine consumption, television viewing, and so on. Additionally, with each positive habit, other positive habits go on the rise, such as dieting. If you can make one positive change and stick with it for sixty-six days, a multitude of benefits will emerge that you may not have forecast in advance.

The Path to Happiness and Stick-To-It-Ness

Personally, I believe the key to happiness resides in developing a spiritual foundation and choosing positive, non-destructive environments and people, like libraries and physical universities and colleges to dwell in. A sure-fire way to unhappiness equates to venturing into night clubs, pubs, and substance abuse, in my mind, however appealing the marketing may attempt to make these negatives seem.

There is no satiating human desire, according to Keller and many other theorists. Keller believes that, of positive emotion, achievement, relationships, engagement, and meaning, meaning is the most important means to happiness. Without a clear sense of purpose, you never know when you have achieved your truest goals, and you rarely get the opportunity to celebrate the climb of steps toward that one big purpose. Keller believes that sticking out the challenges between you and your goal long enough will most often, ultimately, lead to success.

The Accountability Partner

I particularly loved the idea of finding an accountability partner. I knocked off a large number of New Year's resolutions, including fitting back into a size six, writing a short ebook, starting a podcast, and finalizing my reading of the entire Christian bible. While that's not a "one thing" list, it helps demarcate the goals from the frivolity. My approach included creating sticky notes (that are computer generated in Windows 7) and filling them in with the resolutions. Each day, I peer at them, shifting them around from three lists as they fit: (1) waiting to start, (2) started, and (3) finalized.

While this method proved mostly successful, Gary Keller recommends finding an accountability partner will present you with even better potential outcomes. An accountability partner, to sum it up, represents either a coach, mentor, or colleague, but preferably a coach of some sort, who you report to with your progress and who holds you accountable to your periodic goal-setting regime. What struck me as most fascinating about Keller's book was the quote that said that people who write down goals are 39.5% more likely of achieving them, whereas people who wrote down goals and submitted progress reports to an accountability partner proved 76.7% more likely of goal attainment. Wow! Those stats would convince anyone of the merit of finding an accountability partner.

Your Health is Crucial

Every night before bed I read two pages of the Christian Bible (currently on my second round through) and read two to six pages of a second spirituality (currently Hinduism) that I aim to study in depth for a period of five years. Once that five year time frame finalizes, I then move onto the next spirituality (which will be the doctrines of Sikhism or the Koran) at the same time I continue reading and rereading the Christian Bible. I don't know about others, but the spirituality really grounds me, really brings out the positive spirit in my soul, and really puts me to sleep with a peaceful, content mindset. I often meditate daily for at least ten minutes, too, sometimes yielding an hour of meditation in order to counter accumulated stress.

Keller outlines his routine for staying healthy--an essential component of high productivity. He first meditates and prays early on in the day, following this with a nutritious breakfast, and then engages in exercise. By performing such a routine early in the day, one's spiritual, and physical energy heightens, making the rest of the day that much more manageable. When it comes to exercise, eating well, and spirituality, you can't short yourself of these soul and body nutrients without repercussion. So, enjoy the fruits of your "you" time, and fill your lungs with oxygen, your mind with peace and goodwill, and your body with health and nutrition.

The Travelling Student Training

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 I skipped a day of cherry picking to work on my studies in the sun.

As the days passed I found myself needing to dedicate more and more time to my studies. Not wanting to hide from the boss while I studied, I decided I would hit the road in search of adventure and opportunity and on my last night in town we went to a cherry picker gathering hosted by the local church. It was interesting meeting pickers from all

over the world. Despite pickers coming from four continents we'd all ended in Young, an Australian city of 7000..

I found another picker who planned to leave the next day. His name was Jaque and he spoke virtually no English. He was heading to Sydney for one last party with some French friends before going back to France. The next morning Jaque and I split the fare on a cab to the bus, that would take us to the train station, and then eventually to Sydney. I noticed a German girl sitting at the bus stop and struck up a conversation. I was relieved she spoke almost perfect English as trying to speak French with Jaque was getting exhausting

As we sat, an Australian drove up in a truck "you guys looking for work". Our group, now three, all shook our heads no. We'd had enough of hard labour, and our group was bound for Sydney, the biggest city in Australia. After a short bus ride to the train we all boarded and went our separate ways. I'd called in late, so the only seat left was in first-class. I made my way back to the private cabin, which sat three people, but I had it all to myself. As a side note for anyone at Athabasca planning to travel to Australia or New Zealand. Get your ISIC international student identity card! I would have saved \$50 on that train ride alone had I had one.

The train ride was amazing. It seemed every 30-60 minutes the scenery changed. We'd go through sections of lush green forest, followed by dry brown fields, and every once in a while I'd see a wallaby hopping its way up a hill. I hooked my computer up with my mobile internet stick and let time fly as I made some finishing touches to a case study.

After a few hours the beautiful scenery slowly became replaced by roads, buildings, and graffiti. We were nearing Sydney, where I'd start the next leg of my Australian adventure. I didn't have an exact plan, but I was excited to be there. The train slowed as we pulled into Central Station. I got off the train and strapped 70L bag to my back and walked out into the city.



Awesome Sale

Except for a five-foot wide strip of ceiling needing a third coat of paint, our garage is largely done. Roy insisted the tongue and groove plywood sheathing the walls and ceiling of this thirty by forty-four foot building be covered with Tremclad paint. It is a durable but stinky alkyd paint. As I work in the building I keep the windows and giant overhead door open in a feeble attempt to air it out. I expect it'll be off-gassing for months.

The (twenty plus!) electrical receptacles need to be wired into the boxes and the breaker box closed. The three hundred watt bulbs hanging from the ceiling will be replaced by eleven fluorescent fixtures. With the bright white walls and abundance of lighting it takes on the quality of a surgical suite.

The reason I've been nudging this project along since we poured concrete last fall is because I've *never* had a garage to park in. The other reason is that for the first time ever I will host my own garage sale. For years I've dragged folding tables and load after load of great stuff to Andrew. As part of multi-family sales my mom, sister, and I had the benefit of more merchandise and more manpower. So while my sister weeded her garden between customers I gave up a minimum of three days for each sale not counting set-up and takedown.

For the last couple of weeks I've been assembling tables and carrying box after box of stuff into my garage. With more than thirteen hundred square feet space is not an issue. I've also decided to part with chairs. Four small chairs covered in a lovely textural purple Sunbrella fabric. A petit slipper chair with skirted slipcover. Six chairs from Roy's mom's dining set. I may even let our two purple microfiber tub chairs go.

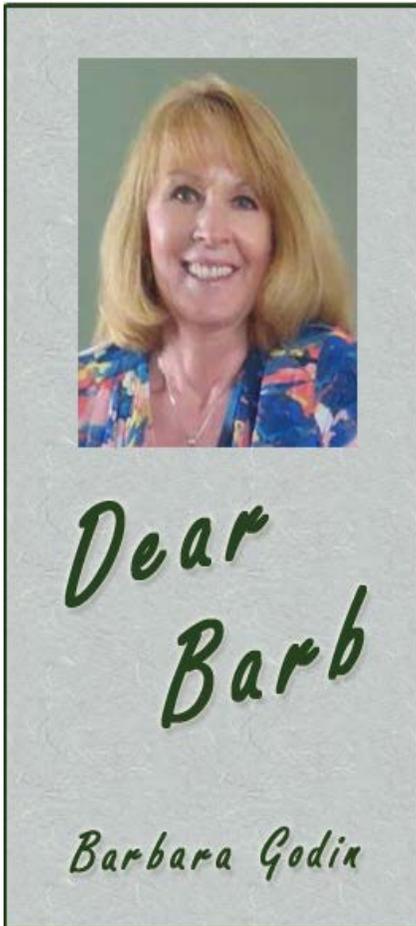
And let's talk tables. There'll be at least six occasional tables up for grabs, maybe more. I've got two French provincial end tables I've hung onto for years because they're well made and delicate. I planned to redo them in the shabby chic style. This imagined project is so old that new products have been invented to accomplish it! Any odds on whether I chicken out on selling them and keep the dream alive for another year?

Of course, there'll be books. Plus I've got about twenty or so audio books that I know I'll never listen to again. I'm letting most of my cook books go. Lately I've turned to the Internet for recipes.

A twelve volt cooler, HP printer (and extra cartridge), three unit intercom set, and Garmin nav system are also on the sales block. Bolts of fabric and yard goods, scarves I no longer wear, garden décor, and collector farm toys are up for grabs.

Now I just hope customers are willing to brave a few miles of gravel to get to this awesome sale, from where I sit.

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



Family Defects

Dear Barb

My fiancé and I have been dating for three years and we are planning to marry next summer and have children right away. Unfortunately, quite a few of my finance's family members have birth defects. For example, he has a sister who has down syndrome, a cousin who has cystic fibrosis, and two other cousins are mentally slow. I am concerned about our children inheriting these conditions and I think we should get genetic testing before we have children. I have mentioned this to my finance and he says if our children are born with birth defects then we should accept them as they are, since children are gifts from God. I don't see it that way. If there is a chance of having a child with a birth defect I would rather adopt, as I know it is not something I could deal with. Looking for some advice. Thanks, Laura

Hi Laura:

I commend you for being honest with yourself and realizing your limitations. Have you shared your feelings with your fiancé? This is a big issue that definitely needs to be resolved before you marry. Is your fiancé at least willing to go for genetic testing, if so then you can postpone this discussion until after you get the results. Genetic testing is done through a simple blood test. In order for you and your fiancé to pass on a genetic abnormality to your children you both have to test positive and then there is only a 25% chance that your child will inherit the gene. If only one of you screen positive for an abnormal gene, your children will probably not inherit the condition. Even if your fiancé does not want to be tested you can be tested and if something shows up then perhaps you could convince him to go for testing. If the screening shows positive for both of you and your

fiancé still does not want to adopt, you need to do some serious thinking about this marriage and your future together. Thanks, Laura, for bringing up this very important issue.

Dear Barb:

My sister is suffering from mental illness which includes paranoid thinking. She is convinced someone is getting into her apartment and stealing her cigarettes and pop while she is sleeping. I know that is not possible because she has a deadbolt lock on her door, plus a chain and a lock on the doorknob. She wants my husband to put a new lock on her door. My husband is reluctant to do this because in the past she has called the police on family members if she believes the work they have done is not up to her standards. I just don't know if we should replace this lock because I am positive no one is getting into her apartment and if we replace the lock and the items are still missing, we will get blamed for installing a defective lock. I believe she is drinking the pop and smoking the cigarettes but forgets that she did. I'm not quite sure how to handle this without causing my sister to freak out. Thanks Jeanne

Hi Jeanne:

Paranoid thinking is often a part of numerous mental disorders. To maintain your sister's peace of mind perhaps you could suggest that she hire a locksmith. This will take your husband off the hook and prevent any subsequent repercussions from your sister. If money is an issue, maybe the family could get together and help her out. It's a tricky situation, but hopefully she will come to realize no one is getting into her apartment, therefore she must be the one drinking the pop and smoking the cigarettes. Good Question!

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.

Weird Canada

THE LOON THAT REPLACED A LOST VOYAGEUR

The loon that graces Canada's one-dollar coin (which Canadians call the "loonie") is only there because in 1986 the original design, showing a voyageur, got lost in transit.

JUST THINK— I'M GOING TO BE ON A COIN! WHAT WILL THEY CALL IT? "THE WOODSMAN?" "THE CANOEIST?" OH, I'M POSITIVELY GIDDY!



WAIT— WEREN'T WE SUPPOSED TO GO UP THAT LAST TRIBUTARY?

WANDA WATERMAN



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IMPORTANT DATES

- May 27: AUSU Annual General Meeting
- June 10: Last day to register for courses starting July 1
- June 10: AUSU Council Meeting
- June 11-13: Convocation at AU! Congratulations!
- June 15: AUSU swag draw for survey respondents
- July 10: Last day to register for courses starting Aug 1

AUSU's Annual General Meeting

AUSU has scheduled this year's Annual General Meeting for Wednesday, May 27th 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. This report reviews some of the projects that AUSU Council has completed over the past year and provides financial information for the last fiscal year.

All members are welcome to attend and participate! To receive call-in information, agendas and other documents, please contact our office by email at ausu@ausu.org, by phone at 1-855-497-7003, or through the chat feature on our website www.ausu.org. Hope to talk to you all there!

Win AUSU Swag!

We want to give you 1 of 5 amazing AUSU Prize Packs!! Just fill out our short survey about the AUSU services that affect YOU, and then enter the draw! The survey is quick and painless, and your input will help us determine how to best represent YOU, AUSU's members!

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/AUSUTVM>

Are you searching for a new job?

<http://www.ausu.org/services/career.php>

AUSU has put together a great list of tools to help our members be successful in their search for the perfect job. Whether you are searching for a part-time job this summer or a fulfilling career, we've got you covered! Check out our new career links page.

NOW AVAILABLE! Athabasca University Students' Union Student Health & Dental Plan

For the Benefit of those that Depend on Us

What's Covered?
Ambulance • Prescription Drugs • Health Practitioners • Dental Accident • Medical Equipment & Supplies • Dental • Tutorial
For further details please visit mystudentplan.ca/athabasca

Am I Eligible?
Students become eligible once they have reached their second course (or 6 credits) in a year. Coverage will start on the 1st of the month following your enrolment if you register before the 10th of the month.
If you register later in the month, coverage will start the 1st of the second month.
If you opt out of the plan it will not be offered again for 11 months, should you continue to qualify.

Note: Students must reside in Canada and be under the age of 70 to be eligible.

How do I Access the Plan?
Use your myBenefits Cards to submit claims at the Pharmacy, Dental Office and Health Practitioners. Download your card today at mystudentplan.ca

Submit your claims online or via mobile app with Great-West Life GroupNet available for free for Android, iPhone and Blackberry.

mystudentplan.ca • 1.877.746.5566 ext. 249 • athabascaplan@mystudentplan.ca

Upcoming AUSU Services!!

We are very excited to tell you that we have been working hard on some great new services for AUSU members. These things are still in the works (so SHHH, don't tell anyone!) but we are hoping to bring you mental health services, a new interactive website and mobile app, and updated course evaluation surveys in the near future. Stay tuned!!

CLASSIFIEDS

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

Views and articles presented here are those of the contributors and do not represent the views of AUSU Student Council

THE VOICE

500 Energy Square - 10109 – 106 St NW - Edmonton AB - T5J 3L7
Ph: 855.497.7003 - Fax: 780.497.7003 attn: Voice Editor

Publisher Athabasca University Students' Union
Editor-In-Chief Karyna Hoch
Managing Editor Karl Low

Regular Columnists Hazel Anaka, Barbara Lehtiniemi, S.D. Livingston,
Wanda Waterman, Barb Godin, Christina Frey,
Samantha Stevens

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