

THE VOICE

MAGAZINE

Vol 23 Issue 28 2015-07-10

Meeting the Minds

Interviewing Dr. Kinshuk

The Cost of Incompetence?

The Value of a Vote

A Room of One's Own

Finding Space and Inspiration

Plus:

Alibi App

*A Voice Cries Out
and much more!*



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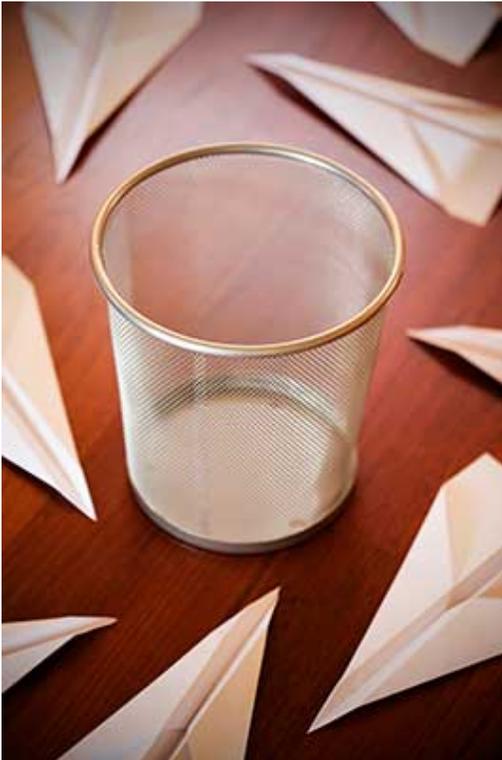
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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR



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**Falling Behind****Karl Low**

Our feature interview this week is with the Associate Dean of the Faculty of Science at AU, Dr. Kinshuk. Dr. Kinshuk works out of the Computing Sciences department, juggling his duties as Dean with publishing research papers and teaching Comp 695. Read how for him, the why of the teaching is as important as the content itself, and, more importantly, see how he'd like to develop AU's education so that you can get feed-back in real time as to how you're doing on your courses.

Now, if you're like me, such an idea probably scares the dickens out of you. After all, I've found that you can complete most AU courses in the span of three weeks. But the way that I've found that out is by procrastinating until the last three weeks before getting anything done. While it might seem that having instant feedback would help that situation, in reality, part of what makes me procrastinate is the guilt I feel for having procrastinated. So rather than confront the difficult feelings and task ahead, I put it off even further. Knowing that the system would be giving me immediate feedback on how far behind I'd fallen would probably just compound the whole situation.

Of course, eventually I'm so far behind that there's no choice left but to just grit my teeth and plow through the entire course. It's not a method of studies I'd recommend to anyone, as I'm always aware of how many opportunities I've missed not just to finish the course, but to actually learn. On the bright side, I am getting better.

But when it comes to the idea of not doing things in a timely fashion, writer Philip Kirkbride this week takes a look at the costs that this AUSU Council has and will incur by having not been following their policies, or by, like me, putting off unpleasant actions until they no longer have the choice. Since I already said my piece of what I think about the upcoming AUSU voting extravaganza, I'll not repeat that all here, but take a look at "The Cost of Incompetence?" and see if you agree with Philip's assessment. If you do, then you should probably let AUSU know before they make their final decision on what's happening.

Also this week, Barb Lehtiniemi takes another look at how students who are budding writers can get away from it all to concentrate on their craft, this time concentrating on the opportunities for those of us who haven't already been published. Deanna Roney deals with some of the difficulties of small town living, and Primal Numbers looks at an app that does nothing but record everything you're doing, and why on earth you'd want to have such a thing running.

We also have our selection of music and film reviews, artist interviews, advice for writing or life in general, plus Hazel Anaka gives us a way that the downtime we spend on the road can be converted to useful learning time. Or it would be if she could convert her cassettes.

So, until you head out on the road, enjoy the read!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Karl".

MEETING THE MINDS

INTERVIEWS with AU's EDUCATORS



The Associate Dean of AU's Faculty of Science, Dr. Kinshuk, currently holds an NSERC/iCORE/Xerox/Markin Industrial Research Chair for Adaptivity and Personalization in Informatics, and has more than 300 research publications in refereed journals. With all this going on, The Voice Magazine is very happy that he was able to take the time to be interviewed by our own Marie Well.

Marie: You have won a variety of honours such as chairs and fellowships. Please describe some of your most cherished honours.

Kinshuk: It's difficult to say because I'm not certain if I'm actually clear about what you mean by honours. Maybe I should start with this: I like to think very applied. Where I find things more interesting is when I can see real useful applications. Anything that relates to that, I find that interesting. So, for example, the work we are doing in our NSERC chair with industries, we are creating technologies and methodologies to support how we can improve learning, and that interests me a lot. So, from that point of view, this NSERC chair supported by Xerox, CNRL and McGraw Hill, and the research that happens there is quite interesting for me.

Our work is in individualized learning. So, thinking about where the students are and how we can help them learn where they are, that has been the focus of that chair. Similarly, we started a technical committee on learning technologies through the Institution of Electrical and Electronics Engineers, and there, the focus is on identifying what new technologies are coming that can help education or help learning. I was the founding chair of the technical committee, and the focus again has been very applied.

Similarly, we have the Educational Technology and Society Journal that I founded, and that is another initiative very heavily focusing on providing interaction between people who develop educational systems and people who use it--for example, developers and teachers and students and so on. So, providing that interaction between them is a very applied focus and that's another one. What I see in today's context with that journal is that it is the first open access journal on educational technology. We started in 1998. It has been really useful for educators and for students because they don't have to pay anything to read as well as to publish. It is completely money free, you can say. Everything happens on a volunteer basis so that everybody benefits.

I think those are the kinds of things that have been of interest to me.

Marie: Kinshuk, what class do you tutor or coordinate? Which class is your "baby"?

Kinshuk: If we are talking about Athabasca experience, then, here, because I have a number of different roles, I teach one course. When I joined Athabasca University, I started as a professor and director of the School of Computing and Information Systems. I had a lot of admin duties because of the directorship. Then the NSERC chair started, so the research focus also increased. Now I have associate dean responsibilities instead of the director position. So, because of all these additional duties, I teach one course, and that course is COMP 695 Research Methods in Information Systems. I co-teach it with Professor Kumar. We don't have any tutors in that course, so basically all the teaching activities are done by myself and Dr. Kumar.

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

Kinshuk: I am not sure if there are any challenges because an important thing for me is how can I understand my students? My attitude is that we should be able to help our students in real-time, when they are learning. We should not wait for them to find a problem and contact us, or until we actually see their formal assessment—that's too late. My role occurs when the learning is actually happening.

If you think about it, even in physical classrooms, you generally have about fifty or sixty students, so, typically for a teacher, it is not very easy to understand a student, but at least, you can see the gestures and nonverbal cues just by being in that environment. How can I then find about my students in online learning environments? So that is something that for me is very important. There are lots of different ways that can happen, and that is where my research and teaching are very much meshed with each other, simply because this is what I also research: How I can find out about my students. In teaching, I try to be very much in sync with my students. I do a lot of synchronous interaction. In COMP 695, the first thing I do is to invite students to connect with me online by Skype and other means as they see fit. I like to ask them to tell me about themselves so that I can have some understanding about individual students so that I can then individualize the instruction to them.

Marie: How do you aim to stimulate student motivation in online learning environments?

Kinshuk: For me, learning happens when people can see the relevance and usefulness of the learning. I can give a very quick example of that. A lot of us, when we learned many things in our childhood, in our schooling, in our university education, we learned those because we needed to pass the exam. One example can be differential calculus. Most of the students don't really know why they are learning it when they are learning it. You probably took calculus at one time, and you may not have known why you were learning it and how you will use that knowledge. For me, learning is something that I would like to make relevant to students. I like to provide learning of relevant cases, and that's how we have structured our COMP 695. I always try to think how learning can be made useful to our students.

Now, as I mentioned before, if you compare it with a physical classroom teaching experience, in a physical classroom, students are sitting in a class, and in some way they are trapped because they can either listen to the lecturer or perhaps they can sleep or maybe check their emails. In online, because they are in their own environment, it has its own distractions. If I'm trying to teach in that environment, I ask myself, "How can I make learning interesting and relevant for them?" My responsibility becomes, even more in the online environment, to make learning relevant. If my students are not learning, that's not their problem: that's my problem. So, how can I make learning relevant for them so that they can see the value, see how they will use it, and see the long-term benefits they can have. And learning will certainly be more effective if they can see the importance. That's how I try to stimulate and motivate my students by showing them the benefits and usefulness in their context.

Marie: Kinshuk, what is your approach to providing feedback to students to help them with their learning objectives?

Kinshuk: I try to provide real-time feedback as much as possible. Now, I should mention the type of research we are doing. Namely, when we teach, we find it sometimes that we don't have the type of mechanism that can provide that real time feedback. How can we train our students to come to the solutions themselves, rather than spoon-feeding them, how can we ensure that they have the skills to find the solutions. How I can motivate them to be good problem solvers, to consider different options, and to understand where their strengths are and where they need some more help. We are working very heavily in learning analytics to create such mechanisms. Not all of it is in the production, so not all of it is currently used in teaching, but as we do that research, we bring that in our teaching. So, I identify as much as I can about my students and then try to provide individualized feedback based on their circumstances.



The Cost of Incompetence?

Philip Kirkbride



I know many of you won't be reading this, the sun is shining, the beaches are full, and the last thing most of us are thinking about is Athabasca's Student Union. Yet, for those of us involved in the University community, recent happenings have been hard to miss, both the recent AGM and the coming election (or by-election). A recent post on the (unofficial) Athabasca University Facebook group got me thinking. I won't post the full comment, just a fact which really stood out to me:

A by-election at this stage involves the same procedure and costs as a general election. If a by-election is held now, a General Election would have to follow in a few months, doubling the expense and the effort of staff.

The post had risen to the top of the page with 11 likes, on a page where posts are lucky to receive 3 or 4 likes. Obviously students care about the cost of both the AGM and the election process, but what are the costs, exactly? And what should they be? It's all a bit foreign for a communications student like myself but I was determined to find out.

For myself the whole AGM debacle started with AUSU's attempt to shut down *The Voice*. This was a major issue for many students and led to people looking further into AUSU. When students looked more closely at council's behaviour, some didn't like what they saw. It brought to light bylaw violations, and unusual accounting that caused students to pass a motion asking for certain councillors to be removed from the union (all of whom have stepped down except for AUSU President, Shawna Wasylyshyn) and a motion asking for an in depth audit of AUSU finances.

While little progress has been made on acting on those motions, they have managed to cause quite the legal bill. In an email to *The Voice* writer Barbara Lehtiniemi, Corrina Green outlined some of those legal fees which include:

12/15 - **\$1901.87** – Review of election policy

4/30 - **\$2202.15** – Consultation in regards to the article removed from The Voice Magazine.

5/31 - **\$2650.91** – The bulk of these charges relate to the AGM.

5/31 - **\$491.66** – In regards to social media posts that were of concern to AUSU by a former employee.

"... it brings the total for Legal Fees this year to **\$10,292.12**," wrote Corrina, "Sadly, we have not received our invoice from Shores Jardine for June yet, which I suspect will be here any day and will be no less than the last couple of months from them. AUSU asked Fiona for a full legal opinion on the matters brought forward at the AGM and that has not been included in any of the invoices yet."

AUSU originally budgeted \$3000 for legal fees for this fiscal year, but it looks like they're well on their way to reaching the \$15,000 mark. That's enough money to provide a bursary for 20 students (students' top priority according to a recent AUSU survey.) However, the costs don't stop there.

A report released by the Finance Committee on July 8th also mentioned "... new Executive with little governance knowledge" as a contributing factor to the costs. This likely refers to Shawna Wasylyshyn who is responsible for chairing meetings but has had difficulty doing so. It was for that same reason that a 'parliamentarian' (unregistered) was hired for the AGM at a price of \$200.

The \$200 price tag now seems like a deal as a report released July 7th by AUSU says they're now considering hiring a parliamentarian for regular assistance. The two candidates being considered charge \$210/hr and \$350/hr. In addition to a parliamentarian to help executives with governance, AUSU is considering a 3-day governance class at a cost of around \$3000 for Shawna Wasylyshyn, at the suggestion of Innovation Alberta. However, VP Finance, Corrina Green commented that no such course has yet been approved.

When it comes to running an election, past councils have used an in-house voting system through the AUSU website, it was free. The current council has decided to use an external service called Simply Voting. This service was used to vote on motions put forth at the AGM for a cost of \$200USD (\$254 CAD). If there's a by-election, the same system will have to be used twice, once for the by-election and once for the general election a few months from now. According to Simply Voting's pricing calculator (assuming about 27,000 eligible voters in any given month) each election should cost \$3,730 USD (\$4,742 CAD). Bringing the total cost of using Simply Voting to \$9,684.

In addition to the voting service AUSU will need to hire a CRO to manage the election process. \$1,000 has been set aside for the CRO and having two elections will mean paying that amount twice.

When asked to comment on the situation VP of Finance, Corrina Green responded:

"Bottom line, the remaining councillors that are refusing to step down are going to spend almost \$6000 (this does not take into account the demands on staff and their time) to hold a by-election, and in 7 months they will spend it again to hold a general election. It is unsettling that they have that much disregard for fiscal responsibility as councillors."

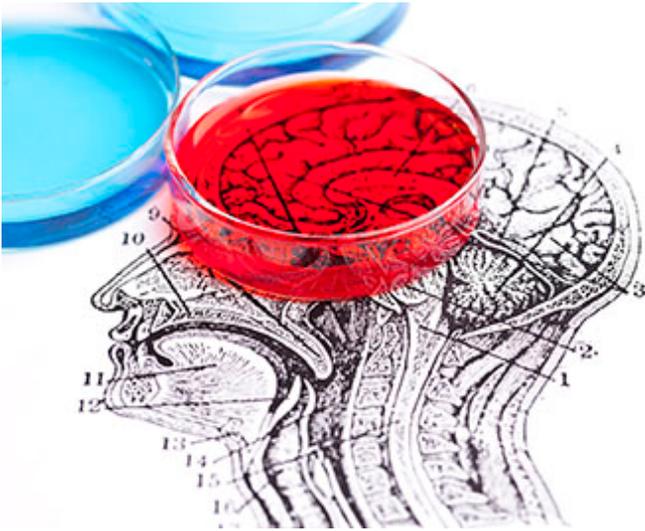
To summarize; CRO \$2000, Legal fees \$10,000 and counting, Parliamentarian \$210-\$350/hr, voting system almost \$10,000. The cost of incompetence? Priceless.

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

Primal Numbers

Alibi App

S.D. Livingston



Instant replays are great. They leave no doubt about whether the puck went into the net, or which horse won. And they'd be incredibly helpful in all kinds of situations, like proving what your contractor promised he'd do. Now an app called Alibi can do just that, recording your life 24 hours a day. The only trouble is, the data might disappear before you can use it.

Ryan Saleh is the co-founder of Alibi, and as the CBC [reports](#), his app "works in the background to record audio, video and location 24 hours a day, seven days a week." We'll get to the privacy concerns in a minute, but there's no doubt that this app could prove invaluable.

For instance, suppose a boss or co-worker is harassing you. Having a recording to prove your case could mean keeping your job, or at least getting your rightful severance pay. Or imagine that a friend borrowed money and then denies it. Or you're at a peaceful protest and the police get heavy-handed.

In all those situations, and countless others, you can't always anticipate the need to turn on a recording device. But it can be a lifesaver to have it running in the background, ready and waiting for you to hit the Save button. The app then hides the file in a safe location on your phone where no one else can access or delete it.

Another bonus? As Saleh told the CBC, pulling out a recording device can cause an already tense situation to escalate, whereas Alibi's "surreptitious recording" can help avoid that.

There are, of course, some privacy concerns. In Canada, you can legally record a public conversation that you're part of, including any interactions with the police. The same thing generally applies in the US.

Private conversations are a different thing, but you might be surprised to know that in Canada it's not necessarily illegal for someone to record their private conversations without telling you. As this article on the MacLean Law site [notes](#), it's legal as long as at least one participant in the conversation knows it's being recorded—even "when such recordings are used for evidence purposes at trial."

What you do with that recording could be illegal. And intercepting or recording a conversation you're not part of is a criminal offence.

So an app like Alibi becomes more an issue of trust. Should you tell every person you encounter that you're recording them? If you don't, can friends and family trust you not to share their private words with others?

Obviously, there are plenty of other apps and devices that present the same privacy concerns. Text messages can be saved and broadcast on social media. Smartphones, digital recorders, and tablets can easily have their built-in recording features turned on.

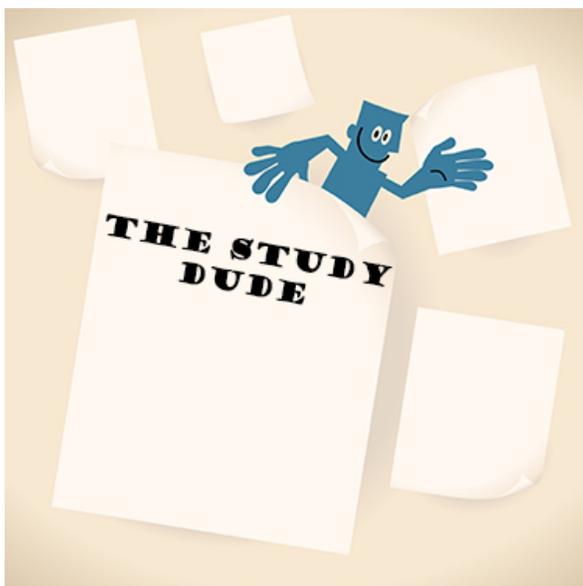
In short, if someone has malicious intentions, there are a hundred other ways they can record video or audio without you knowing it. Alibi doesn't present any more of a concern than those other methods do, and it has the benefit of being there even in unexpected situations where you might not have time to start recording.

If there's one big shortcoming with Alibi, it's the one-hour recording limit. After an hour, the app automatically deletes the data and starts fresh. As well, the company doesn't store any of the previous recordings.

That's great for not using up tons of memory on your phone, but if you find yourself in the kind of situation the app is most useful for, it's also possible that you won't be able to open the app and save your file. Suppose you're taking part in a protest. Things get out of control and you find yourself injured or in the hospital. Will you be thinking clearly enough to remember that you need to archive a recording before the hour is up? If you get arrested (wrongfully or not), will you have access to your phone? If you get into a traffic accident or confrontation, it could be several hours before you calm down enough to remember you've got a witness in that app you installed several months ago. But by then it's too late.

In this age when so much data about our lives is recorded, Alibi isn't really an alarming intrusion. And the technology could be a real boon if you ever need it. Just remember—you might not be the only one with a silent witness in your pocket.

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



Study Tips from a Semi-Anonymous Friend

How to Write Like a Top Student

There is nothing more that The Study Dude wants for you than to know how to insert compelling and complex arguments in your paper.

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 begins by slogging through some heavy material in a book called *Thinking Skills: Critical Thinking and Problem Solving* by John Butterworth and Geoff Thwaites. If you love math and logic, then this book will tickle you pink; if you don't love formulas and conditionals, then don't run away. You'll learn the craft of making compelling arguments in the matter of 1500 words or less: the length of this article.

Introducing Critical Thinking

In a previous article, I mentioned asking a professor what was meant by the words *critical thinking*. In that article, I talked about how her lips curled and eyes furrowed when she replied, "If you don't know what critical thinking is, then you don't belong here." After reading the start of Butterworth and Thwaites book on critical thinking, I realized that I probably had a solid foundation in critical thinking, maybe even a better grasp than the professor had, given my success in logic and math courses. Yes, critical thinking deals a lot with logical principles, such as how to build an argument, and it later delves into some probability and statistics.

However, in spite of all the success in logic and math, none of the information seemed to make everyday problem solving easier. I still woke up in the morning with struggles ahead, obstacles throughout the day, and even sorrows. These fundamental everyday issues are just part of life for everyone. After reading Butterworth and Thwaites's starting chapters, I realized that the principles of problem solving and argumentation may have great benefit for writing essays, especially at the more advanced undergraduate or graduate levels. Critical thinking can help you make complex arguments that propel not just the views you read, but your own views in making claims, synthesizing (putting together in unique ways) materials, and coming to conclusions. And who doesn't want to actually insert their own views and conclusions in a paper rather than just reiterate what Professors Jack and Jill said?

The following outlines Butterworth and Thwaites's introduction to critical thinking:

- Critical thinking involves "giving a fair and unbiased opinion of something."
- Judgement, often construed as opinion, could lead to critical thinking, if supported with enough compelling evidence.
- We tap into critical thinking skills when we read, listen, or think about content.
- We need to learn how to analyze the structure of an argument as well as be able to evaluate how well the reasoning supports the conclusion derived.
- Critical thinking paves the path where you do not think passively or pigheadedly.
- You need to possess the following traits to critically think: 1) open-mindedness, 2) non-passive and information driven thought, 3) a degree of scepticism, and 4) independent thinking.
- You should only make claims insofar as your reasoning provides support for your conclusion.

Argument Identification

If you can identify an argument, you can present one, too: it will likely be a compelling one, given your skill-set. I need to learn this skill. Whenever an argument comes into play, I'm the first to back down. Yes, I tend to listen to the other person's views, internalize their perspectives, and integrate them with my own views. I'll even nod my head in agreement and pipe up with a "really?" when they tell me an outlandish claim, not meant to be taken literally. In other words, I truly need to apply the ability to identify and construct an argument.

With the talent of identifying arguments, you can put forth compelling reasons to support your conclusion. Your reasons may overflow with subjectivity, and may not even be true, unbeknownst to you, but, hey, they belong to you and therefore have merit. So, spill the beans and let your point-of-view come to the forefront.

Let's delve into how to identify an argument, according to our friends, Butterworth and Thwaites:

- Before you can evaluate an argument, identification of the argument is essential.
- Try to determine the conclusion of the argument by positing a 'so', 'therefore', 'because', or 'since' in the line of reasoning. If you can say, for instance, 'therefore, global warming poses a threat to

humanity" as a summation of the reasons presented, then your conclusion is that global warming poses a threat to humanity. Simple.

- You can have reasons that lead to an implied conclusion.
- The standard form of an argument has reasons leading up to a conclusion.

Argument Analysis

When you insert an argument in your paper, many alternative argument structures exist for you to choose from. I just love that about logic; you can view through visual diagrams or charts a seemingly infinite number of alternatives that you can choose from to craft your argument. With an endless supply of possible argument patterns, you can get ultra-creative in how you map together your conclusions. And then—*boom!*—you just advanced your writing to a graduate level. Crafting advanced, compelling arguments does not entirely rely on logic, however; visual thinking is also instrumental. Either logic or visual learning will get you in the door on making complex, convincing arguments.

So, let's get started with Butterworth and Thwaites's rundown on how to analyze arguments:

- Typically, a conclusion finds support in from one to six supplied reasons.
- The conclusion should be true as a result of the reasons being true, and the conclusion follows from the reasons. In other words, the reasons should support and lead to the conclusion.
- Some reasons might have independence from one another, and other reasons might have dependency. For instance, to conclude that forgiveness is divine, you might say that (1) Jesus Christ died for our sins on the cross and that (2) the Sikh Guru's bolstered forgiveness as the highest virtues; thus, forgiveness is divine. These reasons would be considered related, but independent, both leading to the conclusion. If you said, however, that (1) Jesus Christ died for our sins on the cross and that (2) to prove the extent of his forgiveness, he forgave the disciple Peter for his betrayal, these reasons would seem more dependent. Now, for all the atheists, if you forgive me for engaging in spiritual discussion, you will have realized the epitome of virtue, according to the previous arguments.
- When you have independent reasons leading to a conclusion, you map this by placing the reasons as the letter R1, R2, etc. and drawing an arrow from each one independently pointing toward the conclusion, C. If you have reasons that are dependent, say reasons one and reasons two (R1 and R2), you draw a circle around them both together to show that they are dependent and from that circle, draw an arrow pointing toward the conclusion, C. You can have some reasons independent and other dependent in the same argument. That's the beauty of logic--you can craft your own design based on an unlimited amount of possibilities.
- Some arguments have intermediate conclusions, where the reasons lead to a conclusion, which then leads to a main conclusion. These reasons supporting intermediate conclusions are together called sub-arguments, and one or more sub-arguments can lead to a main conclusion.

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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A Room of One's Own Finding Writing Space and Inspiration

Barbara Lehtiniemi



If you're a writer, one of the biggest barriers to finishing a writing project is day-to-day diversions. Many writers find success completing projects only by getting away from home and its inherent distractions and responsibilities.

Finding a quiet place to write isn't difficult. Some writers build a little garden hut, others rent secluded cabins, and some find success in a quiet corner of a library or café. However, if your writing requires a little inspiration to go along with your seclusion, a writing retreat might be catalyst that launches your writing career.

Last week, in "[Writing Away From it All](#)", we looked at writing retreats for established writers—those who have at least one published product to their credit. This week, we'll explore some retreat possibilities that are open to any qualified writer who can afford the fee.

Writers' retreats typically provide accommodation in inspiring surroundings, and often include writing coaching. They can be hosted by educational institutions, writing or arts-related groups, or private enterprise. Writers can find retreats using the internet, scouring writing publications, and through word of mouth from members of local writing groups. While many are open to unpublished writers, some require writing samples to accompany the program application. Below are brief descriptions of a few retreats available.

The Banff Centre. The crème de la crème of Canadian writers' retreats. If you would find inspiration rubbing shoulders with the likes of Margaret Atwood, Joseph Boyden, Yann Martel, or Michael Ondaatje, The Banff Centre might be for you. Writers can apply to participate in [literary arts programs](#), or simply [book a room](#) with an inspiring view. The centre is "nestled on the side of Tunnel Mountain" in Banff, Alberta, with access to wifi and hiking trails. You can't do much better than this. Fees vary by program: [The Writing Life](#) 5-day program this fall is \$996 and includes meals and accommodation. Check out www.banffcentre.ca for more details.

Sage Hill Writing. A combination of getting away from it all with writing workshops to push the writer forward. Located on Blackstrap Lake, near Dundurn, Saskatchewan, Sage Hill offers writing programs for writers of all genres, in any stage of their career. Less experienced writers can check out their [Emerging Writer Workshop](#), which runs July 20-30, 2015 and features authors Wayne Grady and Marilyn Simonds. Summer programs are \$1295; scholarships and bursaries are available. Visit www.sagehillwriting.ca for details on programs and accommodation.

Write By the Lake. An annual writers' retreat hosted by author and creative writing instructor Richard Taylor. Held at a private cottage on Lac Brassard in Val-des-Monts, Quebec, this retreat includes opportunities for canoeing, kayaking, and swimming. 2015's retreat took place this week, but keep it in mind for next year or check out other writing activities on Taylor's website. The [Write By the Lake](#) retreat runs for five days each July

during the day only (no accommodation but lunch is provided); this year's fee was \$395. See www.taylorswave.ca for more details.

Whether you want a room of your own—without distractions—to write, the company of other writers, or coaching and classes, there is sure to be a writers' retreat to meet your needs. Since many retreats are held in beautiful surroundings, writers can use this time as a combination of vacation and work. Most writers' retreats offer flexibility, allowing writers to divide their time between work and play.

Good luck with your writing project! Next week, we'll look at Writers-in-Residence programs available for established writers.

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



Oh Where Art Thou, Globe and Mail

Deanna Roney



Through the forums on my English 384 *Creative non-fiction* course site, I learned that the *Globe and Mail* was accepting submissions. Usually before I consider what I am going to submit I like to look through the magazine, or in this case, paper: What articles are they running? What is the tone? Who are their advertisements directed at? These all give an insight into what they may be looking for.

So, I thought I would pop down to a local convenience store in my small town and pick up the paper. This particular store has a large magazine/newspaper rack. I was shocked when I stood there, searching through the titles, searching, searching, and nothing. All that was available was the local paper, an abundance of X-rated magazines, hunting and fishing, quilting, celebrity gossip, and teen magazines. I suppose, judging by the collection being at least half magazines which were wrapped in plastic and hidden at the back, perhaps I had chosen the wrong store.

Moving onto store number two, a pharmacy. This store had a significantly smaller news rack. Also significantly less X-rated material. However, the rest followed the same theme as the first store, only with different ratios, here the most popular seemed to be teen magazines and quilting. At least these are G-rated. And, a majority of the 3000 people that live here quilt; if you don't quilt you know someone who does—I know someone who does. So it makes sense, supply and demand. But, unfortunately, no *Globe and Mail*, and nothing even remotely similar.

I decided to move onto lucky number three. Store number three really has it all: it is a dollar store, grocery store, movie rental, Canadian 2 for 1 pizza joint, frozen yogurt stand, fireworks store, and a Mr. Sub. This store

has to have it, I think, it is an old-school, one-stop shop themed store. But, the one thing they don't have? A newsstand. The local paper and free classifieds are stacked on the front counter, but nothing national. Strike number three.

So I decided to make a call when I got home, to my parents a town over to see if they could possibly find one for me there. My question was answered with laughter, but after they gathered themselves they agreed to look for me. And much to my disappointment, but at this point not surprise, they struck out. Magazine and newspaper stands there looked about the same as here.

A friend was flying to Vancouver the next week, and graciously offered to pick one up for me. Seems like a lot of effort to get a newspaper! I do realise there is a very obvious solution to this problem: go online. I know I could find all the information I wanted by browsing their website. But sometimes it is nice to be able to flip through a physical paper rather than scroll through a page. While I love my small town, and the lifestyle that comes along with it, sometimes I am shocked at the lack of diversity, the lack of resources.

I understand that local newspapers are important, and you do have to supply the magazines which are in demand. I suppose, also, that these kinds of magazines could, in theory, open your mind, depending on what part of your mind you are looking to expand. I just find it disappointing that it is next to impossible to find a newspaper or magazine that reports on world events.

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

Click of the Wrist

It's summer, and the living is easy—or at least it's supposed to be. Unfortunately, summer holidays can be more stressful than ever. We're off our routines, we're hot and out of sorts, and odds are we're frantically prepping for a trip or engaged in the never-ending unpacking after one. Time out! This week's links offer opportunities to take a moment for yourself.

On the Go

To unplug, or not? Smart phones may actually help you centre yourself, at least if you use meditation-focused apps to decompress. This *New York Times* video features profiles a few you may want to try out for yourself.

Body, Mind

If you find it difficult to calm your mind enough to meditate, yoga may help you achieve a peaceful state. These poses offer support for body, mind, and spirit.

Zen and the Art of Cussing

If traditional relaxation techniques don't ease your frustration, mix it up a bit. This guided meditation may use—ahem!—nontraditional language, but there's no denying it's both calming and satisfying. Now why don't you tell us how you really feel?



The Travelling Student Reverse Hitch-Hiking

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 installment I found the RV I'd rented was a manual. In a last ditch effort to get to Cairns, Australia I posted an ad online "Free ride to Cairns must drive stick".

I stood in the entrance to Central Station in Sydney looking at my phone. I was waiting for someone named Dylan who'd responded to my ad. As I looked around anxiously, my phone started to vibrate.

"Philip speaking," I said, and we'd spotted each other. Myself with thick black glasses and a large backpack reaching above my head to well below my waist. Dylan wore scrappy clothes (in an intentional grunge sort of way), a fedora, and had long curly hair.

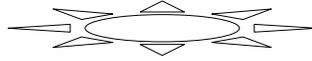
We made our way to the subway and, in due time, to the RV rental. But, first, we had to make a detour. Dylan was on his own journey. Originally from Melbourne, Dylan had slowly hitchhiked his way (a full 9 hours away if constantly driving) to Sydney. Having just arrived in town the day before, he wanted to say hi to a few friends before heading out. So we made a mid-afternoon trip to a downtown pub where a group of equally grungy guys were drinking around a table.

I don't say 'grungy' in a condescending way. In fact, I was thrilled to be hanging out with some authentic Australians. They all shared a common style that I can't say I've seen outside Australia, and, to this day, can't find any examples of online. It was something along the lines of 90s grunge meets beach bum meets Australia. The Australian image isn't about 'prim and proper'; it's about clawing your way through thick bush, narrowly avoiding crocodiles, and, if you're lucky, still having your shirt in one piece by the end of it.

With Dylan driving I was free to slam back a few beers as the group passed around a phone showing Instagram photos of the 'bummiest' people they'd been able to capture on camera. We started talking about the road trip ahead, including all the secret spots the groups knew about. Exchanging information about beaches and parks where you can get away with camping for free is crucial on an Australian road trip. Unless, of course, you don't mind paying \$20-\$30 a night to stay at the RV parks frequented by family vacationers and retirees.

While I wouldn't have minded staying longer, the RV rental place was closing, so we headed over. I figured I'd have to pay to add Dylan to the RV insurance, but, seeing no one outside, and having the keys already in my pocket, we decided to go for it. I passed Dylan the keys and we quickly hopped into the RV, myself now in the passenger seat. The engine started, the tires squealed, and with that we were on the road battling our way through Sydney traffic, stalling only a few times along the way.

As we drove over Sydney Harbour Bridge, Dylan took out a retro Casio camera, which looked like it had been the top of the line in the early 80s, and started snapping photos. With the sudden realization of adventures ahead I stuck my head out of the window and, feeling the cool breeze, let out a roaring 'whoop hoo!'



The Fit Student

Marie Well

Taking that Passion for Reading to a Whole New Level



Do you love to read? Are you a proverbial bookworm, with the bookish reputation and the face of an owl? You don't need to look like an owl to love books, but you must peer at books regularly, like on buses, during lunch hours, before bed, and in restaurants. I often read while waiting for meals, while waiting for a movie to start at a theatre, while waiting in an office—basically, any chance I get. I even venture as far as reading two pages apiece from six books nightly, almost without fail. Therefore, no stretch of the imagination told me that reading a book titled *Careers for Bookworms & Other Literary Types* would appeal to not only me, but to a large portion of academics who love to learn—and love to read. If you love to read, this article will surely enlighten you to job bounteous job prospects.

Work in a Library

I encountered one woman who fits the role of librarian to a tee. With a tight bun in her otherwise longish hair, perfect English in a pseudo-British accent, the calf length skirts, and a never-ending focus on unceasingly shelving books, this woman epitomizes the role of a librarian. I once asked her how she became the perfect, loyal librarian, to which she responded that it's her way of keeping her job. Ideal employee.

Eberts and Gisler highlight the enormity of libraries in Canada: over 2, 500 libraries, although Canadian schools are gradually eliminating school libraries. Eberts and Gisler reveal the good news: an assortment of specialized libraries prevail, including pharmacological, medicine, law, transportation, and religion-focused libraries. Typically, a librarian requires a master's degree in library science with continuing education underway, and sometimes requires even a PhD.

Work at a Book Publishing Company

I longed to start a publishing company, and even drafted a proposal to participate in a class dedicated to helping budding entrepreneurs write business plans and access loans. My graphic design skills, my love for learning programs such as InDesign and anything Adobe, and my desire to promote the books of people I love, led me to entertain the idea of not just working for a publishing company, but starting one on a small scale.

The jobs at publishing companies range from executive editor (at the top of the rung) to an editorial assistant (at the bottom of the rung) (Eberts & Gisler, 2008). Other careers, according to Eberts and Gisler include indexing as a freelancer (yes, referencing page numbers to topics at the back of the book), serving as a literary agent, writing book reviews, a bookstore owner, and a retail bookstore staff member.

Work at a Magazine

I love writing for The Voice magazine. I enjoy writing about topics that impact students on some scale. The pay helps out and the student writers and copyeditor delight me to no end. I wouldn't trade the writing role for a ride in a limousine to Banff springs even. Yet, working at a newspaper is another story. The thought of reporting on crime, slamming individual reputations, and sensationalizing, or otherwise decontextualizing, everyday events grinds my nerves. Working at a magazine, however, poses some potential for writing in specialized areas that stimulate the learning process.

1,962 Canadian magazines exist with a burgeoning market in bridal magazines. You could work as an editor in chief down to an editorial assistant. Canadian magazine editors make roughly \$44,000 on average.

Work in the Movie or Television Industry

I worked at a university television station, and loved the experience. Harnessing the power of a broadcast quality camera and editing suite suited me fine. Even more so, the research process, finding quality stories, usually on professorial research, thrilled me. My director even informed me that a documentary would well suit my style of production.

In television news, the reporter typically takes a position before getting the research. Not me. I found a position only after wading through as much data and research as I could possibly find.

Radio show hosts, movie script typists, story analysts, script consultants, a television story editor, a television talk-show producer, or a news anchor denote the types of careers available for the more glamorous industries. But you will want to relocate to either Southern California, New York, or Vancouver to penetrate these markets (Ebert & Gisler, 2008).

Work as a Researcher

Working as a market researcher incontrovertibly marked one of the happiest career moments of my life. I longed to get to work to find out what the survey for a festival revealed, or what the survey for the City showed. I couldn't get enough of reading the SPSS statistical data, of creating PowerPoints to display the revelations, of writing literature reviews. Market research tasted like heaven to me.

Research jobs may include working at a think tank, such as the Fraser Institute, C.D. Howe Institute, Institute for Research on Public Policy, and so forth in Canada. Archivists who maintain and preserve records also involve research and reading. Curators (for example, museum curators) gain access to, display, and maintain objects or relics of intrigue, often pertaining to a particular area of specialization. If you love history, a job as a historian might pique your interest, although jobs in this field are competitive. My favourite of the research careers: information broker, where you do research through mainly libraries and databases for customers--be forewarned, however: you'll need a master's degree in library sciences to gain credibility in this field (Eberts & Gisler, 2008).

So, there you have it: an assortment of careers for the passionate reader. Drop that book momentarily, and scour the want ads. The perfect job for the avid reader awaits you.

References

Ebert, M. & Gisler, M. (2008). *Careers for Bookworms & Other Literary Types*. New York, NY: McGraw Hill.

The Writer's Toolbox

A Voice Cries Out

Christina M. Frey



Writing is personal.

Sometimes it's personal in content, like a journal or memoir—and sometimes there are personal aspects, like a character who goes through a painful experience similar to your own. Then there's the catharsis that can come from getting your frustration out onto paper (or screen!), and the vindication you feel when you turn your real-life nemesis into your story's villain. And who can ignore the hours of proverbial blood, sweat, and tears that go into a writing project that comes from your very soul?

But I'm talking about a different kind of personal.

It's not just what you put on that paper or screen, it's how you put it. And that *how*, that personal style, is a part of you, a reflection of you, an aspect of you that you're sharing with the world. That's your own personal writing voice, and it's as unique to you as your fingerprints.

Unlike fingerprints, though, your style grows with you, and it may change as you develop as a writer. Young writers may try to mimic a favourite author's style, and even experienced writers often use this technique as a tool to improve their craft or try new genres. The books you read, the sensory experiences you have, and the people you encounter all affect the way you translate your imagination into sound and story.

That's what makes the job of an editor so unique—and so challenging. It's vital to understand the norms and standards of grammar and usage (and when and how to apply them) and to have the proverbial eagle eye, but editors also need to be able to look past that and make judgment calls as to when too much is too much or too little is not enough. They need to ask themselves not only what rule might apply, but why—and when it's better to leave well enough alone.

I call it ESE: extra-sensory editing.

We've all seen the horror stories floating around on the Internet—stories of editors who favored rules over style where style should have trumped, and even editors who ran roughshod over an author's personality as voiced through their story. Like one of my clients, whose (former) editor added graphic descriptions she feared might trigger her readers (she cut them before handing the manuscript to me). Or another writer I know, whose editor changed the informal writing style to make it a lot more formal—even though the breezy, chatty style fit the nature and mood of the story.

But those horror stories aren't as common as you'd think. In fact, most professional editors I know would be dismayed at the idea of overriding your style. They want to help you improve your writing, characterization, and pace, and whether they're editing for content and flow or looking for grammar and usage irregularities and inconsistencies, they'll make suggestions and recommendations within the context of your style. Writing a

formal essay? Complete sentences mean you're putting your best foot forward. But in first-person YA fiction, sentence fragments may be a natural fit.

An editor can also tell you how your style, or the way you're applying certain aspects of your style, may affect readers. Sentence fragments may not be *wrong* for your genre, but in some cases having too many of them back to back may create a choppy flow. Similarly, an author may appreciate using a higher vocabulary, but overdoing the big words at an already tense point in the story may come off as melodramatic, minimizing the believability of the scene.

Editing is teamwork, not a top-down relationship like the traditional red pen seems to suggest. Whether you're looking to transition into a career as an editor or submit your life's masterpiece to another's eye, consider developing your ESE when you edit your own or others' work. In the end, style and substance interact to create something stronger—and a happier experience for your reader.

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](#).

Student Sizzle AU's Hot Social Media Topics

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

The AUSU Forums exploded to life this week with the anticipation of AUSU council's summer election. And the AUSU office is tweeting helpful info for students daily.



AUSU Student Forums

In the [Ask AUSU](#) forum, Mark poses questions for council on corruption, conflict of interest, and interference with *The Voice Magazine*. In the [General Student Chat](#) forum, Barb expresses the opinion that AUSU council should call a General Election and not a by-election.

Other topics include curling, health insurance, and the status of the AUSU forums.

AthaU Facebook Group

Casey is looking for help deciding which courses to take from a pool of possibilities. Nicole is concerned about the availability of required course EDPY 470. Curtis seeks clarification on course extensions for funded students.

Other posts include downloading AU library books, appealing marks, completing a course a month, the Black Knight, and courses CRJS 410, ENGL 351, MATH 215, and PSYC 405.

Twitter

@AthabascaU tweets: "[#AUNews](#) "Truthful Grit: AU's Tracey Lindberg makes stunning debut as fiction novelist." <http://ow.ly/PfQh5>."

@AthabascaUSU (AUSU) tweets: " AU student can get a discount on Microsoft Office 365 for 4 years! Check it out! <http://bit.ly/1IHsWV3> [#AthaU](#)."

In Conversation

..with Faded Paper Figures, Part II

Wanda Waterman



("Yogi hippigraphy, sell us immortality,
PhD without a gig, dirty, broken drill rig,
Bible basher black belt, bankers buck a short sell,
Kurzweil on a pill-kick, handing down a pink slip,
Missionaries at the door, bleeding out at every pore,
Democratic fail safe,
Money gets you in the game,
Money gets you in the game,
Money gets you in the game . . . ")
- Faded Paper Figures, "Not the End of the World
(Even As We Know It)"

Faded Paper Figures is a Californian trio that went its separate ways yet remained together as a band, writing, composing, and recording at a distance while pursuing demanding careers in medicine, academia, and the music profession. Their fourth album, *Relics*, was recommended [here](#) in the *Voice*. Recently band member (and Yale prof) R. John Williams took the time to talk to Wanda Waterman about their name, their sound, and telling the truth so beautifully it hurts.

Has anything funny or bizarre ever happened to you while working together?

FPF: Recording is always a potentially hilarious experience, as some takes are just really, truly awful. Luckily, none of these ever make it out into the world, but Kael will sometimes put one of our really bad takes on a loop in our headphones, with lots of reverb or something, and we'll get to collectively enjoy our awfulness. But no, we'll never let anyone else hear this badness.

How did you come up with your band's name?

FPF: We liked the image of the "palimpsest" (which has interesting literary and musical connotations), but the word itself seemed too academic and hoity-toity, so we settled on its every-day equivalent, Faded Paper Figures.

What influence has Los Angeles, or California in general, had on the development of your sound?

FPF: Both the band's sound and its lyrical ethos are no doubt an expression of our working in California. Some songs (for example "Metropolis" or "Lost Stars") are direct reflections on southern California.

Your songs project a certain persona: that of a reserved, bookish person capable of examining his or her personallife—as well as the world at large—with wisdom and objectivity. Was that deliberate, an organic development, or both?

FPF: Very organic, and probably unavoidable. John's lyrical style is very much informed by his intellectual life, and Kael's musical compositions are the result of having explored and mastered hundreds of different musical styles with his work. And the fact that Heather comes to the microphone sometimes after, literally, saving lives at the hospital just a few hours before, means her voice is informed by more than just one's typical emotional state. So we're all thinking through the process very objectively as we go along, even if, at its core, the whole thing is driven by an uncontrollable passion.

If your band's life were a movie, what kinds of scenes would fill it?

FPF: It'd be something like *The Matrix*, where things seem normal for a while (work), but then suddenly unravel and seem strange and beautiful (the band).

What do you feed your muse?

FPF: Time is the most important element (and it's always, unfortunately, in short supply), but we also read, watch, and listen to everything—often obsessively. We love so much current music, but quite often revisit brilliant bands from the distant past (post-punk Liverpool, for example, has been haunting us recently).

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

FPF: To tell the truth so beautifully that it hurts.

What's next?

FPF: A few more videos for songs from *Relics* will be released soon, as well as an EP with a few remixes and B-sides. And we're just sitting down to start thinking about ideas for the next album.

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



The Mindful Bard

Wild Tales

Wanda Waterman

Recipe For Disaster: An Ounce of Error Plus a Ton of Reaction

ACADEMY AWARD® NOMINEE
BEST FOREIGN LANGUAGE FILM

"TALES OF APOCALYPTIC REVENGE, THE YEAR'S MOST FEARLESSLY FUNNY FILM."
Rolling Stone, THE WALLPAPER



WINNER NATIONAL BOARD OF REVIEW BEST FOREIGN LANGUAGE FILM



OFFICIAL SELECTION CANNES TORONTO TELLURIDE SUNDANCE



"HILARIOUS! OUTRAGEOUS!" -Ann Thompson, INDIEWIRE



FROM PRODUCERS PEDRO AND AGUSTÍN ALMODÓVAR



WILD TALES

A FILM BY DAMIÁN SZIFRON

CASTING BY ANITA DE LA ROSA, COSTUME DESIGNER ANDREW HARRIS, EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS PEDRO ALMODÓVAR, AGUSTÍN ALMODÓVAR, PRODUCED BY PEDRO ALMODÓVAR, AGUSTÍN ALMODÓVAR, DAMIÁN SZIFRON, WRITTEN BY DAMIÁN SZIFRON, DIRECTED BY DAMIÁN SZIFRON, CASTING BY ANITA DE LA ROSA, COSTUME DESIGNER ANDREW HARRIS, EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS PEDRO ALMODÓVAR, AGUSTÍN ALMODÓVAR, PRODUCED BY PEDRO ALMODÓVAR, AGUSTÍN ALMODÓVAR, DAMIÁN SZIFRON, WRITTEN BY DAMIÁN SZIFRON, DIRECTED BY DAMIÁN SZIFRON

WWW.WILDTALESMOVIE.COM WWW.SONYCLASSICS.COM

SONY PICTURES CLASSICS

Film: *Wild Tales*

Director: Damián Szifron

"If you prick us do we not bleed? If you tickle us do we not laugh? If you poison us do we not die? And if you wrong us shall we not revenge?"

- William Shakespeare

Are moral lapses forgivable? Of course they are, in a universe wherein love remains an active operating principle. But sometimes this same operating principle demands that a price be paid for simply doing as we please, and sometimes that price seems way out of bounds.

A driver, for example, who freely expresses his road rage may find himself hanging from his seatbelt while his BMW leans over a muddy river.

A self-absorbed runway model might find herself on a plane manned by a vengeful ex-boyfriend who never got over the heartless way she dumped him.

An apathetic, overly punitive Department of Highways might find itself on the wrong side of an explosives expert.

A spoiled rich boy might watch his beautiful, expensive wedding go up in flames when his new wife discovers his indiscretion.

A father, desperate to protect his flakey son from the repercussions of his actions, might find himself vulnerable to ever-widening circles of extortion.

In each of these six stand-alone film shorts from Argentina there's a gross—yet somehow justifiable—overreaction to error. Are such overreactions helpful? Do they exacerbate the problem or wake people up? Do they bring justice or destruction?

Unlike most arthouse films, the plot of each one of these *Wild Tales* is incredibly entertaining. Although the message requires a little rumination, each series of events nails you between the eyes, and the scenes occupy your thoughts for days to come.

Like your average Western, the plots turn on revenge, but unlike your average western the characters use delightfully imaginative and unexpected means of correcting the balance of justice. If you sense any personal injustice at all, watching these responses is incredibly cathartic.

Director Szifron, speaking with *Interview Magazine*, made some relevant comments on the distracted state of the world today, ending with what looks like a call to mindfulness, something that's getting harder to do these days:

"The technology is not stupid ... But you have to be very brave not to use a cell phone today, and I have to force myself a lot to read a book. It's very hard to read a book in this day because the Internet distracts you and you spend hours looking at a screen. So it's very hard to have a serious, deep conversation with somebody or spend a considerable amount of time understanding something."

In a nutshell? Our little mistakes can lead to disastrous consequences. The solution? Mindful acceptance or mindful revenge. Take your pick.

Wild Tales manifests four 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 provides a respite enabling me to renew myself for a return to mindful artistic endeavor.
- 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](#)*.

Music Review

To Keep From Losing Our Minds

Samantha Stevens



EP: *To Keep From Losing Our Minds*

Band: [Eric and Aaron](#)

There are a few criteria that I judge my favourite music by: originality, balanced harmony between vocals and music (especially if there are more than two singers), dramatic bass, emotionally driven vocals, light but thought provoking lyrics, and feelings of epic awesomeness washing over me while I crank up the volume on my headphones. Rarely do I encounter new musicians that meet all of my criteria in one of their songs, and rarer still do I find an entire EP that makes my entire music

collection pale in comparison. Eric and Aaron's first EP *To Keep From Losing Our Minds* is one of the best EPs that I have had the pleasure of listening to.

Eric and Aaron's sound could best be described as a combination between Queen, U2, Coldplay, and Jack Johnson with several rock and pop influences. The duo met in New York City four years ago just as Eric was pursuing theatre work after a career as a professional ballet dancer. Needing a voice teacher, Eric found Aaron who had performed in rock operas and taught voice. Hitting it off right away, the duo have now written over 150 songs and *To Keep From Losing Our Minds* features 6 of their very best songs.

Of all the tracks on this EP, "Woods" is the best example of how their beautiful voices complement one another. The song is whimsical and light, but it is the chorus where you can really hear the amazing vocals. The split between the two voices, with one repeating the other, adds an emotional dimension that lies just beneath the surface of this wonderful song.

The keyboard and ukulele in "Apples" start the song off with a light and youthful tone. However, as the song progresses and the rhythm increases, the song elevates to a higher dramatic level that is expertly matched by the crescendo of the music. The keyboard playing in the background reminds me so much of "Clocks" by Coldplay, one of my all-time favourite songs, that I couldn't help but love this one.

The lyrics in "Long Time" are beautifully written, and I recommend listening to this song anytime that you feel down on yourself. The song focuses on self-love, and the point of view used by the singer is unique and original. Combined with epic keyboard playing and masterfully played guitar, the vocals are so extraordinarily harmonious, emotionally driven, and supportive that the tone of the song is elevated from a mere tune to a heartfelt ballad. As well, the fact that the singer is speaking to a loved one, telling them not to judge themselves by what they see in the media, is a refreshing take on an important message.

Eric and Aaron will be playing at various house concerts throughout the United States this summer, so if you find yourself travelling and fancy hearing some phenomenal music, then be sure to check out one of their [shows](#). Otherwise, I highly recommend checking out their music on their [website](#).

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



Road Trip

One day while visiting a city library I browsed through their discards to see if I wanted anything for my own collection. That day I bought my first audio books.

No, technically that's not true. I have many, many personal development books and presentations on *cassette tapes*. Cassette tapes. They may as well be eight tracks. Someday I may figure out a way to convert this investment of hundreds of dollars to CDs. Until then, I keep them. If I wanted to listen to them at home I'm sure we've got a cassette player kicking around somewhere.

However, my preferred listening time is when I'm driving. And for that reason I give any books on cassettes a wide berth. I also have never paid full retail. Naturally, this has limited my choices to what I find at second hand stores and library clearance bins. It reminds me of Forrest Gump's pronouncement that "life is like a box of chocolates; you never know what you're going to get." Selection may vary.

This crapshoot of choice has broadened my horizons, though I haven't been able to start the one about a werewolf. Others, like a James Patterson one, felt like someone was poking my eardrum. The formulaic writing and inadequacy of his word choices felt like an insult.

On the up side, the randomness of buying what someone else has discarded has introduced me to authors like Tami Hoag who I'd never experienced before.

There is a decided difference between reading a book and listening to one. Granted, it's just as easy to be distracted using either format. With the audio books I shut it off during city driving. I need undivided focus for both the driving and the listening. With a book in hand, it's easy to glaze over the boring parts or lose focus depending on what's happening in the room or how tired one is.

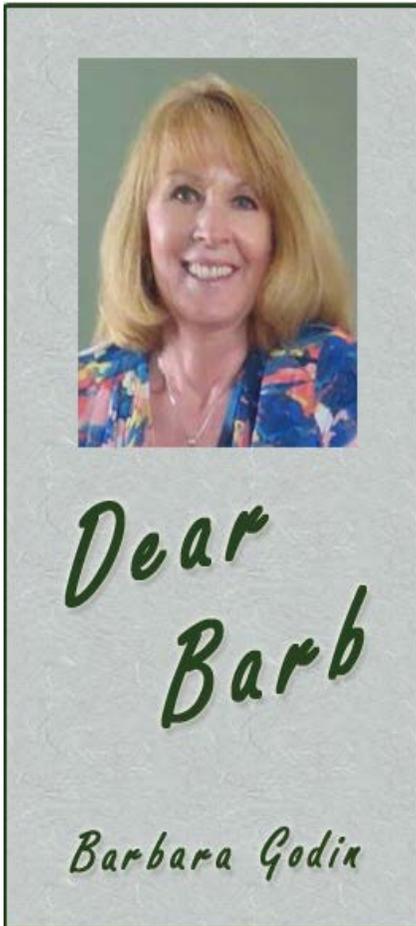
I've learned that, while I always considered myself a visual person, I am captivated by beautifully lyrical words well performed. Recently I finished Frank McCourt's *Tis*, read by the author. I laughed out loud at his self-effacing, honest portrayal of his own naiveté. Sidney Poitier's memoir *Measure of a Man* featured his silky, sexy voice.

I've found some gems that warrant re-listening: *The Secret Life of Bees*, *The Yiddish Policemen's Union*, *The Tin Roof Blowdown*, *A Cup of Friendship*, *The Alchemist*. I found Joan Didion's *The Magical Year of Thinking* a tough slog on paper, yet loved it on CD. Surely the change was in me, not the memoir itself.

Sometimes, I try to kill two birds with one stone: be entertained and learn. I loved Sarah Ban Breathnach's *Romancing the Ordinary*, Joel Osteen's *Become a Better You*, Deepak Chopra's *Grow Younger, Live Longer*, Howard Dully's *My Lobotomy*. Thrillers provide outright escapism.

Soon I'm gonna need a cross Canada road trip for Ayn Rand's 50 CDs unabridged *Atlas Shrugged*, from where I sit.

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



Intimacy Lost

Dear Barb:

I really enjoy reading your column every week. I am in my mid-twenties have been with my present boyfriend in a serious relationship for three years. We moved in together last year. The first two years were fantastic, but I've noticed that since we moved in together he is not as attentive and doesn't seem to want to do special things for me. It feels like we are growing apart and that he doesn't care about me or our relationship anymore. For example, he used to bring me flowers once a week and take me out for dinner a couple times each week. He rarely does this anymore. Also we used to sit together and watch movies, now he goes downstairs and watches sports or goes to a friend's place to watch a game. I talked to a few of my friends who are in long term relationships and they say that all relationships eventually go like this and that it's not a bad thing. I am not happy and really don't want a relationship like this. If he is like this after three years, what is he going to be like after five or ten years? I really don't think I have to settle for a relationship that doesn't make me happy. Do you think I'm overreacting, or maybe he's just not in love with me anymore? Help Laura!

Hey there Laura:

First, you are the only one who can make you happy, you cannot get your happiness through a relationship. Happiness begins within you and a relationship can only enhance that happiness. I think you may be overreacting. You say this change has occurred since moving in together. Undoubtedly your relationship is going to change when you go from dating to living together 24/7. Your friends are somewhat correct, but I would not say all relationships are like this. Some relationships go this way, but it's not because the parties don't love each other anymore, it's more likely because they have become comfortable. Comfortable sounds like a good place to be, but in a relationship sometimes being comfortable means complacency and as a result one party may feel as if they have become invisible, or are being taken for granted. Have you talked to your boyfriend about how you are feeling? He may be totally unaware of what's happening. Most people do not realize they have fallen into this pattern and simple awareness may bring about the change you desire. Perhaps he is not bringing you flowers and taking you out to dinner as often because of the ongoing expense. You could set a date night once a month or every two weeks, whatever you can afford. This will give you both something to look forward to and time to spend exclusively with each other. At the end of the day most relationship issues can be resolved through effective communication. Thanks for your great question Laura.

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.

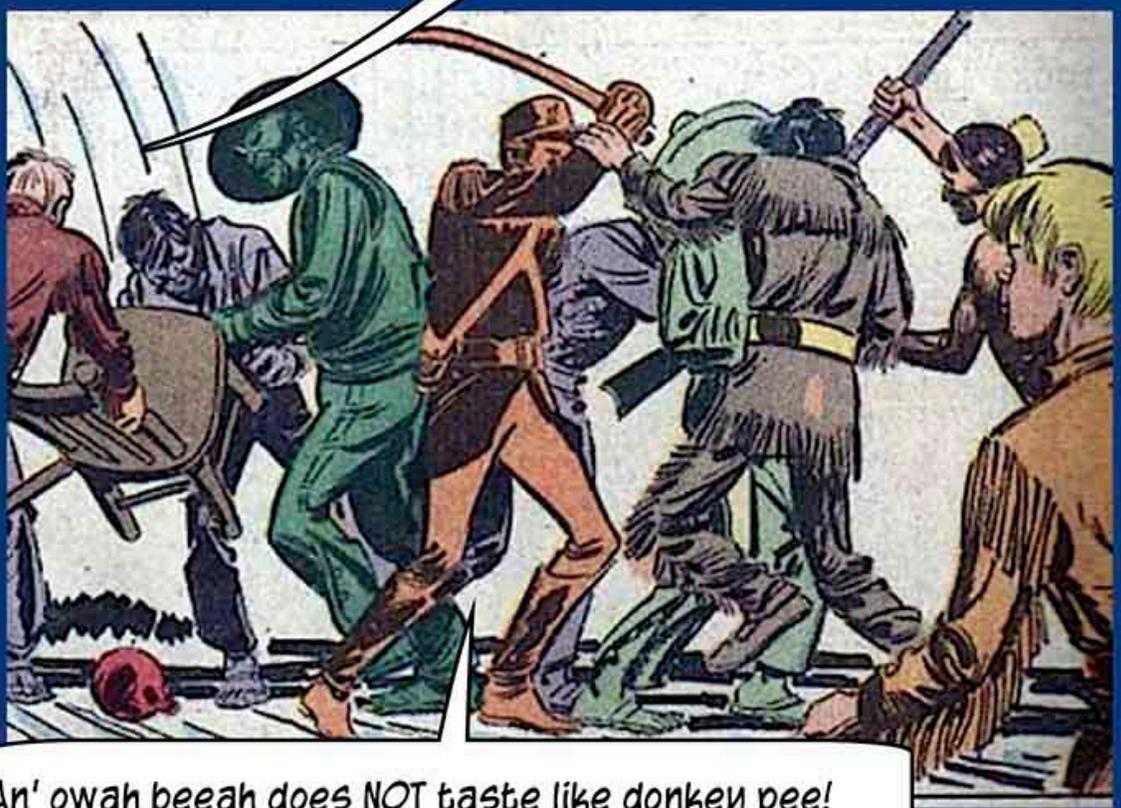
Weird Canada

THE GREAT MAINE-NEW BRUNSWICK WAR

In the 1830's, as a result of a border dispute, Maine declared war on New Brunswick without the support— or the faintest interest— of their own Federal government. Newspapers estimated that Maine could conquer Canada in just six months, placing its governor in position of "president."

The worst battle took place at a tavern where British and American soldiers were drinking together. Someone shouted, "Success to Maine!" There followed a brawl resulting in several broken noses and one broken arm.

When're you yanks gonna learn to keep yer traps shut, eh?



An' owah beeah does NOT taste like donkey pee!

WANDA WATERMAN



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AUSU Policy 3.01 Change

On June 22, an AUSU member brought to our attention an issue with AUSU Policy 3.01 (Elections Conduct). The current version of the policy in effect was passed in error without 21 days' notice to our membership. Upon consulting with AUSU legal counsel, the current policy is deemed to be invalid. As a result, the last formerly approved Policy 3.01 is now back in effect and will be adhered to going forward.

This valid version of Policy 3.01 is posted to our website at www.ausu.org/bylaws/policies.php.

We apologize for any inconvenience.

Please direct any inquiries to ausu@ausu.org.

Free Lynda.com Subscription



Lynda.com offers professional online training videos and courses for everything from photo editing with Adobe Photoshop to creating a WordPress page.

AUSU members can sign up for a Lynda.com membership valued at \$397 for FREE!

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

IMPORTANT DATES

- Aug 10: Last day to register for courses starting Sept 1
- Aug 1: Estimated launch of mental health services
- Sept 9: AUSU Council Meeting
- Sept 10: Last day to register for courses starting Oct 1

Watch for updates soon about the Elections coming up in August!

Forensic Audit Survey

During the May 2015 AGM, a motion was passed recommending AUSU have a forensic audit performed for the previous 6 months.

Given that so few members were at the AGM to vote on this motion, we are polling the members to determine whether students consider a forensic audit to be a good use of membership funds.

Get more info and take the survey here:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/V6LJKRF>

Free Student Planner and Handbook!

AUSU provides members with a free student planner and AUSU handbook! It has a full calendar, study scheduler, contact section, style guides, grade conversion charts, and more!

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

AUSU Emergency Bursary

Did you know that AUSU has an **Emergency Bursary** that can help members pay for course extensions and supplemental exam fees during times of urgent financial need?

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

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

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